JULY-AUGUST

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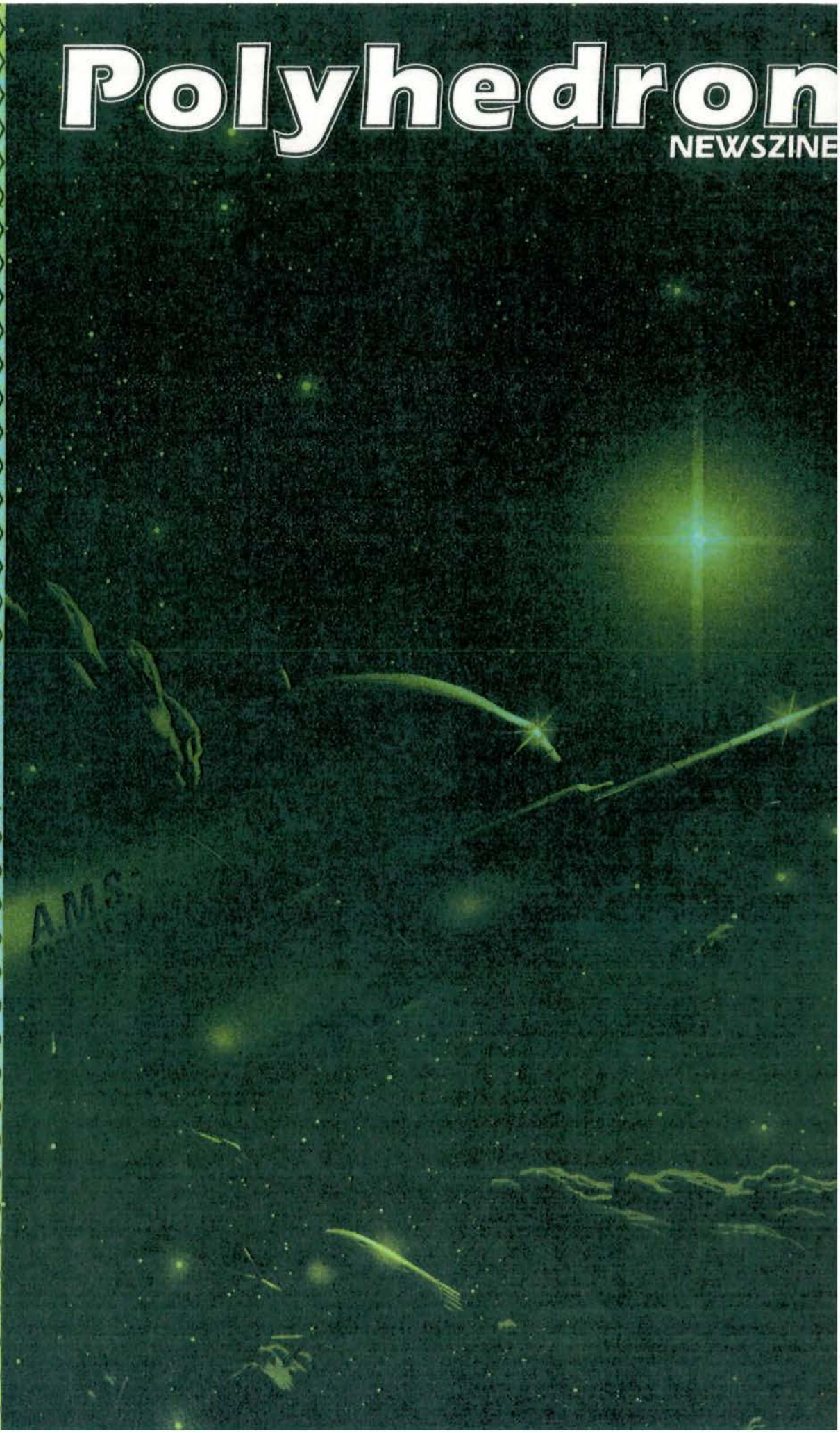
Polyhedron

NEWSZINE



RPGA NETWORK

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Bookwyrms

Fiction From The 25th Century

by J. Eric Severson

Screaming through space in your Krait fighter rocket, you lock your lasers on the approaching asteroid base. As your thumb hovers over the trigger, you chuckle to yourself. You know the New Earth Organization outpost doesn't stand a chance of detecting you because of your craft's stealth technology and your superior flying ability. You are Killer Kane, after all, on a mission to exterminate all NEO bases in the asteroids as a favor for the Martian megacorporation known as Russo-American Mercantile.

An instant before your thumb hits the trigger, your instrument panel lights up like a Mercurian art gallery and a warning buzzer resonates within your helmet. You've been hit from behind! Veering away from the asteroid, you see another Krait—one with NEO markings—following you. No!

It's Buck Rogers!

Encounters such as this one, set in the conceivable 25th century setting of the BUCK ROGERS® XXVc™ world, will provide realistic, gritty, and exciting adventures for thousands of role playing game enthusiasts. More than just an RPG, however, the XXVc game provides the setting for full-length science fiction novels that help shape and define the high tech world of the future. The novels explore the lives of those who live there, be they Martians, Mercurians, Venusians, Terrans, Lunars, or others.

"We really want to create a complete, integrated fantasy world of the twenty-fifth century," says Flint Dille, licensor of the Buck Rogers property and creative director of TSR's West Coast offices. "We're trying to integrate everything, which is no mean feat when you have so many artists, authors, and editors working on a project. We're trying to create a whole new world to explore. Except, this time, it's a real world, not totally a fantasy world."

Following hot on the heels of the Martian Wars Trilogy comes a new book series, called the Inner Planets Trilogy. *First Power, Prime Squared,* and *Matrix Cubed* will focus less on the NPCs Buck Rogers and Wilma Deering of the role playing game and more on new characters and the world itself, according to Mike Pondsmith, designer of the XXVc role playing game and consultant to TSR's book department.

Book One of the new series, *First Power,* is written by WILD CARDS and *Fantastic Stories* author John Miller. As the New Earth Organization rebuilds an Earth shattered by the Martian Wars, NEO ally and Mercurian Prince Kemal Gavilan receives a corpse and a cryptic message from the asteroids. He enlists master pirate Black Barney to find out what he can. But the answer is too hot for the airwaves; they've uncovered a weapon that can turn continents to cinders. The Martian and Venusian powers declare their innocence, and Kemal is forced to return to the royal family he once rejected to regain their trust and learn the awful truth.

Book Two, *Prime Squared,* is by M.S. Murdock, author of the Martian Wars Trilogy by TSR and the STAR TREK novel *Web of the Romulans.* Having discovered his own family's plans for a colossal laser device, Kemal prepares to head back to Earth to inform NEO. The prince learns, however, that Ardala Valmar has snared a prototype of the weapon. Kemal is compelled to stay and destroy the greater of two evils—his family's nearly complete full-scale model. The Mercurian Prince maneuvers through one double-cross after another, trying to keep his uncle, the reigning Sun King, from uncovering his true allegiance.

In Book Three, *Matrix Cubed,* Kemal's problem is compounded by the fact others—including RAM—may have developed remarkably similar laser projects. Drawing this trilogy together in a searing conclusion, *Matrix Cubed* will be based, in part, on a computer game by Strategic Simulations Inc., in a similar vein to the recent DRAGONLANCE® and FORGOTTEN REALMS™ adventures produced as computer games by SSI.

The XXVc game concept "brings science fiction back to its roots," says Pondsmith. "It has a sense of what science fiction used to be, which was fun." The last couple of years, science fiction has been authentic and real, but it hasn't been real fun, Pondsmith says. "I think the XXVc game is going to bring that back."

❑

Back, For A Return Engagement

WINTER FANTASY™ Convention

January 4th-6th, 1991—The Ramada Airport, Milwaukee, WI

Featuring Network-Sanctioned Events:
AD&D® Game Grand Masters
AD&D Game Masters
AD&D Game Feature
AD&D Game Benefit
And many more

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Admission for the weekend $15.00, Pre-registration is $12.00 until November 1st. RPGA Network members who pre-register can sign up in advance for up to four games.

A pre-registration form will appear in the next issue of the POLYHEDRON™ Newszine.

Game masters: if you want to run one of our Network tournaments at the convention—or run events of your own—contact us now. Game masters receive discount admission.

RPGA Network, P.O. Box 515, Lake Geneva, WI, 53147

About the Cover

Artist Robert Daniels rendered this scene of a large robotic freighter and an AutoFac for the Living Galaxy.

RPGA™ NETWORK

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Polyhedron™ NEWSZINE

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Notes From HQ

ConnCon, Conventions and Committees

I recently attended ConnCon in Danbury, Connecticut. The convention ran many Network feature events, an AD&D® game Masters tournament, an AD&D game Grand Masters tournament, a benefit event, and the first Northeast Regional Championship. The championship was open to gamers who did well in events at northeastern conventions. Competition was tough, especially for the six finalists who battled for top honors. The winner was Denise Rabidou, the newly-elected president of the Noreasters Network Club. The Network's advisory committee (more on this below) will create guidelines for future Regional Championships so we can have them across the country.

ConnCon drew gamers from the Northeast, down to North Carolina, and as far west as Kansas City, Kansas. It was held in Danbury's Ramada Inn, which obviously hadn't hosted a gaming convention before. The first night, the hotel staff ushered the gamers out of the ballroom—which the ConnCon staff had reserved months in advance—and into smaller rooms. The hotel wanted to use the space for Soupy Sales, who was appearing at a comedy show there. One of the alternate rooms was the pool area, where the air carried the sweet fragrance of chlorine and the tables were not accompanied by chairs until the convention staff got vocal.

The hotel also apparently didn't think the gamers civilized; during the banquet, scheduled for the last night, the hotel staff didn't put tablecloths on the tables. Further, they funneled the gamers outside and around the back of the building to a hallway where the buffet was spread out.

Convention coordinator William Burger, one of the Network's newest Regional Directors, and events coordinator Wayne Straiton weathered the problems and put on an excellent fun-filled weekend.

One of the nicest features of the convention were all the brand new events. The convention staff wrote most of the events themselves. HQ highly commends the staff for providing the tournaments—wherein player characters have to deal with Indians and settlers, are accused of witchcraft, must save the world's oceans, and prevent magic from being lost forever. These tournaments will find their way to conventions throughout the world in the next several months.

ConnCon is an annual event. When you are planning your convention schedule for next year, put this one on your list.

Conventions

Jeff Albanese of California is the Network's Convention Advisor. He is available to help members who are planning game conventions. Jeff coordinates three major conventions each year in Los Angeles, and last year he was the convention coordinator for Origins, which was held in Los Angelas.

Jeff is a veteran with convention planning, site booking, and event scheduling.

When you write to Jeff, be sure to include a self addressed stamped envelope.

Jeff Albanese, Network Convention Advisor
c/o of Strategicon
P.O. Box 8399
Long Beach, CA 90808
213-420-3245

Convention Characters

The back mailer cover of this Newszine's US version has a Living City character sheet and instructions for using it. If you are coming to GEN CON® Game Fair and plan to play in the Living City Tournament, *Night Watch*, create your character in advance. This will save time during the tournament so everyone can delve right into the action.

If you have played in the Living City tournament before, and intend to play this year, you must bring your character sheet—complete with the experience points your character earned last year. You are responsible for keeping track of your character; if you can't find your character, you will have to start one from scratch.

Calling all Referees

The initial response to the Judge Appeal printed in issue #52 was good, and we already have completed most of the judge scheduling for GEN CON Game Fair. If you returned your Judge Appeal for the Game Fair before April 16th you should already have received a confirmation letter showing the games and slots you are running.

We are having problems finding referees for a few events. We're critically short of referees for *DC Heroes*, *2300 AD*, and *Space 1889*. If we don't get more judges, these events could be canceled.

We're short, but not dangerously so, on judges for the MARVEL SUPER HEROES game, the *TOP SECRET/SI™ game, and Twilight 2000*. We still need a few more DMs for the *AD&D® game*, but these slots are filling fast.

Our *BOOT HILL™* game tournament has been canceled.

If you want to run some games for the Network, and get free admission to the Game Fair, mail in your Judge Appeal today, or give us a call.

Committees

HQ has established an Advisory Committee made up of members recommended by Regional Directors and Network Clubs. This committee is responsible for selecting some of the service awards presented each year, will tally the Gamers' Choice Awards, and will handle other tasks as necessary.

Advisory committee members are: Wayne Straiton of Connecticut, Bob Etheridge of Indiana, Randall Lemon of Indiana, Don Bingle of Illinois, Keith Polster of Illinois, and John Nephew of Minnesota.

We'll keep you posted on the committee's activities.

Take Care,

Jean Rabe

Letters

More About Conventions

My name is Andi, and I'm 20. I've been role playing about three years and was curious why there were no conventions in Austria. As founder of Austria's first RPGA™ Network club, I thought about how to recruit more members, and I decided the easiest solution was to hold a convention.

There were other reasons for holding a convention, too. There are many gaming groups and clubs, and I wanted to get them together.

Everyone who ever helped run a convention knows how much work must be done. It was not easy, especially as no one had ever tried to run one here before.

Although I didn't expect as many visitors as the GEN CON® Game Fair has, I hoped for a good turnout. I wanted to give the gamers as many activities as possible. I printed 200 invitations, sent them to German magazines, and put them on bulletin boards in stores.

Many calls were necessary to get even a few game masters. Long nights were spent thinking about tournaments (the time was too short to ask for them from HQ). Then came the day. Features were for the AD&D® game, Paranoia, Runequest and Warhammer systems. Battletech and Diplomacy championships also were held. Many gamers brought their own games to play, which was, of course, a necessary addition. There were about 80 attendees in all. That may seem like a few, but I know from looking at German conventions with less than 50, that for a first time it was a success.

The Paranoia tournament was great fun for the three game masters and the six players.

RPGA Network members got into the convention free.

Here's some tips for future organizers: open up small-scale conventions at midday, not in the morning; a buffet could bring in more money for you than the entry fee; don't make the mistake to feature too many events; don't use game masters you don't know.

The Second Austrian Gamers Meeting will be held Oct. 6-7, and will feature RPGA Network AD&D game and Paranoia tournaments. It would be great if some folks from overseas or from other European countries would visit.

Andreas Mittterlechner
Regional Director for Austria

Thanks for the convention report—and the photos. Some scenes from Andi's convention, and from CanCon in Australia, are featured on page 31 of this issue.

Putting on a convention is a lot of work. The staff at HQ can vouch for that, as we put on Winter Fantasy, and we have been involved with other conventions for the past several years. However, putting on a convention also is a lot of fun. It's a great feeling to know that your convention was responsible for a lot of peoples' good times.

The RPGA Network has a Convention Advisor, Jeff Albanese, who is available for assistance. Consult the Notes From HQ column for more information. Further, convention coordination suggestions are available from HQ.

If you are holding a convention and want RPGA Network tournaments, give us six months notice. We need the time because we schedule tournaments at more than 100 conventions a year, and we work to make sure that tournaments are mailed to conventions at least a month in advance. HQ also has tournament writing guidelines available for those of you who want to write events for your conventions.

Convention Queries

In the January/February Newzine, you sported a membership form. It concerns me because "Plan 2" is different than on previous forms. I pay both the membership fee and get a subscripton to DRAGON® Magazine with the old plan. Why has this changed? I have meant to write in and suggest that another plan be added to include DUNGEON® Adventures for a "total package deal." Let me know what the verdict is.

Item number two is a little more complicated. When I look at my attractive membership card and read that I am a "zero" level player and judge, I feel a little foolish. I have been playing the D&D® game, AD&D® game, DAWN PATROL® game, BOOT HILL® game, STAR FRONTIERS® game, and others for over 13 years! In fact, up until three years ago, I played at least two of these games a week. I can safely claim that I have more gaming experience than a lot of TSR's staff!

Next is a problem I am sure other members have faced. When there is a convention that is not too far away and occurs on a day not occupied with common duties, why are all sanctioned tournaments there delayed, full, moved, or canceled at the last minute?

Continued on page 30

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The New Rogues Gallery

Adagio Jones and The Goodwinds

by Tim Beach

The Jack Mooney & Sons Circus, which makes its winter headquarters in Ravens Bluff, boasts many wondrous and unusual acts. An act which fits into the former and latter categories—although it does not claim to be part of the circus—is a group of bards called Adagio Jones and The Goodwinds. The Jack Mooney & Sons Circus will appear in the second RPGA™ Network module, **Inside Ravens Bluff™, The Living City,** *which will be released this August. Jack Mooney attractions will continue to appear in the Newszine.*

Adagio Jones and The Goodwinds consists of five talented young people who question authority and established practices through their songs. They travel throughout the Realms with the Jack Mooney & Sons Circus.

The Goodwinds were founded two years ago by Bonnie Harper and Adagio Jones, a pair of bards who found themselves swapping stories over a few plates of seafood in Embrol Sludge's Eatery And Shell Shoppe near the wharfs in Ravens Bluff. The bards followed their meals with a night on the town and by early morning they had become good friends, and realized they had something in common. Adagio and Bonnie were both tired of the adventuring life and were looking for ways to promote peace with music. The two sang their way through cities around The Dragon Reach—until they returned to Ravens Bluff and met Coastal Waters singing on a street corner. Coastal, another bard, was crooning a song about poor people being mistreated by the upper classes. The three discussed the tune—and many other songs—and Coastal suggested the duo expand and advertise its public performances.

Coastal put Adagio and Bonnie in touch with an old friend of hers, William Windsprinter. Though William was considered wild and strange by most standards, he had a following and a true talent for lyrics. The expanded group began playing at fairs and other social gatherings. At one fair—where William was soloing about The Vulture, Ravens Bluff's tax collector, they were derisively called a mock band because their songs mocked the established order.

Soon after that, their popularity swelled and they drew the attention of a fifth bard, Drake Bluenote, who specialized in wind instruments. Drake had a narrow-minded philosophy—as far as the others were concerned, but he was quite talented and was asked to sign on. The five bards have agreed to not allow any more new members into the band.

They also caught the eye of Jack Mooney, who after a particularly crowded performance asked them to join the circus. Although the group travels with the Mooney & Sons Circus, much to the annoyance of cities' politicians, it refuses to be called part of the circus. The bards claim they must be considered independent because the circus could be construed as "a tool of the oppressors which gives mind-numbing entertainment to the poor while catering primarily to the idle rich." Why Jack Mooney allows them to travel with the circus is unknown, although some speculate it has something to do with the crowds they attract.

In addition to regular, advertised performances, one or more of The Goodwinds often walk down the midway, singing a political protest song and attracting a crowd. The crowds are primarily made up of low and middle class townsfolk. The Goodwinds make certain they can be heard above the circus hubub. If necessary, the bards amplify and distort the sounds which issue from their mouths and instruments.

Their repertoire is ever-changing, atlhough it usually includes a few favorites. The tunes range from "mock music" and abstract pieces to soft songs and ballads. Some of their most popular works are: "The Baron's a Fink," "Hard Workin' Serf," "Think of the Children," "Don't Slay the Bulette," "Ravens Don't Bluff," and "Halflings are Whole People."

Every member of the group speaks (and sings) Common, Elvish, Dwarvish, and Orcish; they believe these languages will reach the most predominant elements of the population. Further, they hope their instrumentals will get through to those who cannot understand the lyrics.

They play a number of instruments, including more familiar ones such as the lyre, bandore, mandolin, dulcimer, lute, and harp. Other more exotic instruments include the longhorn, tantan, birdpipe, songhorn, and yarting. The bards also make use of some instruments unique to the Realms: the shieldgong, a circle of beaten brass which hangs from a frame and is struck with mallets; the tocken, a set of open, oval wooden bells which are played like a xylophone; hand-drums, cylinders one or two feet long and six to eight inches in diameter covered on both ends and struck with the hand; and the glaur, a valved metal cornucopia which gives off bright, swooping notes reminiscent of bagpipes. For more information on the instruments, refer to "Music of the Forgotten Realms" in issue 123 of DRAGON® Magazine.

Adagio Jones and The Goodwinds often use two new spells developed especially for them by Darsson Spellmaker, a wizard who works closely with the circus.

Amplify (Alteration), First Level

Range: 5′
Components: V, S, M
Duration: 1 hour per level
Casting Time: 1 segment
Area of Effect: Special
Saving Throw: None

To cast this spell, the wizard or bard moves his hand in a circular motion at the place he wants to center the spell. With the uttering of a command word, the area so outlined, which is disk-shaped, begins to glow softly. The disk created can be as small as two inches in diameter or as large as one foot in diameter. The disk acts as a sound magnifier: whatever enters the active side of it exits the other side at a much higher volume. The volume can be increased or decreased at the caster's mental command, and can be up to five times louder, or softer, than normal.

Distort (Alteration), First Level

Range: 1′
Components: V, S
Duration: 1 hour per level
None Casting Time: 1 segment
Area of Effect: Special
Saving Throw: None

A wizard or bard who casts this spell can alter the nature of any sound originating within range of the spell. Although the volume of the sound remains the same, its resonance, timbre, pitch, or tone may be changed. The sound may be given a buzzing quality, an echo effect, an underwater tonation, and its pitch may be raised or lowered. By mental command the caster sets the type and amount of distortion, which remains constant until he actively changes it again. Any distortion which the caster can mentally hear can be imposed on the sound.

Bonnie Harper

4th Level Female Human Bard

STR: 9
INT: 17
WIS: 18
DEX: 16
CON: 12
CHA: 16
AC Normal: 8
AC Rear: 10
Hit Points: 16
Alignment: Neutral Good
Age: 22
Weapon Proficiencies: Club, Quarterstaff, Hand Crossbow
Nonweapon Proficiencies: Artistic Ability (poetry) (18), Artistic Ability (musical composition) (18), Singing (16), Musical Instrument (bandore, longhorn, lyre) (15), Reading/Writing (Music, Dwarvish, Common) (18)
Bard Abilities: Climb Walls 50%; Detect Noise 40%; Pick Pockets 10%; Read Languages 50%; Influence Audience Reactions, Inspire Allies, Legend Lore
Languages: Common, Dwarvish, Elvish, Orcish
Spells/day: 2,1

Spell Book

Level One Spells

Amplify *Cantrip*
Change Self *Distort*
Find Familiar *Friends*
Read Magic *Spider Climb*
Ventriloquism

Level Two Spells

Flying Fist *Forget*
Magic Mouth *Web*

Appearance: Bonnie is tall and slender, standing 5′11″ and weighing 135 pounds. Her eyes are kelly green, and she wears her dark blond hair long in the back and spiked with gelatin on top. She is a pretty woman, despite her unusual hair style, and she wears a small gold earring from an admirer in her left ear. Her clothing is worn, but serviceable. While performing she often wears black trousers, a white shirt, a bright red jacket, and short black leather boots.

Background: Bonnie is from an area she claims is politically repressed. She never says exactly where this place is, calling herself a citizen of the world when people press her for specifics. She is first and foremost a musician, but she feels a need to do something with her music other than simply entertain. She campaigns for political rights, animal rights, peace, and the environment. Her concern with animal rights has caused her to hesitate using her *find familiar* spell, wondering whether it is morally right to enslave an animal to do her bidding. She is quite vocal about her various philosophies, but is otherwise a pleasant and jovial person.

Bonnie's voice is melodious, but raspy. She sings lead vocals for most of the group's "mock music" songs. For ballads and soft songs she sings harmonies. Although she prefers to sing alto, she has a wide range and sings soprano sections when all of The Goodwinds are singing.

She plays bandore on mock music, ballads, and in the group's string ensemble, longhorn for ballads and abstract songs, and lyre for soft songs. She also writes lyrics and music for many of the group's original songs, especially mock music.

Adagio Jones

3rd Level Male Half Elf Bard

STR: 14
INT: 16
WIS: 16
DEX: 17
CON: 10
CHA: 17
AC Normal: 7
AC Rear: 10
Hit Points: 13
Alignment: Neutral Good

Age: 27
Weapon Proficiencies: Club, Sickle
Nonweapon Proficiencies: Singing (17), Musical Instrument (hand-drum, shieldgong, tantan, mandolin, percussion set) (16), Reading/Writing (Music) (17), Artistic Ability (musical composition) (16)
Bard Abilities: Climb Walls 50%; Detect Noise 35%; Pick Pockets 25%; Read Languages 40%; Influence Audience Reactions, Inspire Allies, Legend Lore
Languages: Common, Dwarvish, Elvish, Orcish
Spells/day: 2

Spell Book

Level One Spells

Amplify	*Cantrip*
Charm Person	*Distort*
Friends	*Light*
Read Magic	*Sleep*

Appearance: Adagio is 5'6" tall and weighs 120 pounds. He is pale-skinned, has short, light blond hair, and sky blue eyes. He usually wears a silver earring in his left ear and prefers loose, voluminous clothing which he ties tight while playing. He always wears hand-tooled leather sandals, no matter how cold it is.

Background: Adagio grew up near Arabel in Cormyr. However, like Bonnie, he now refers to himself as a citizen of the world. He had a pleasant early life, growing up in an upper middle class neighborhood. But he eventually began to wonder why little was being done to help the poor and ill and why peace was regarded as an impossibility. He found a kindred soul when he met Bonnie Harper and formed a music group. His excitement over the group grew as their music met with resistance, and he is happiest when politicians get upset over a tune. It was at Adagio's suggestion that the group call itself a band, and since the band seemed to mean more to Adagio than the other members, they voted on the name Adagio Jones and The Goodwinds.

Adagio has experimented with percussion instruments and developed what he calls a "percussion set." He ordered made two small shieldgongs which have a higher pitch than normal. Adagio hangs these shieldgongs from tall frames which set next to three hand drums. During a performance, Adagio furiously beats out ryhthms, alternating between all the drums and producing a variety of drum and gong pitches in rapid succession.

Adagio plays his percussion set for mock music and abstract songs. He plays mandolin for ballads and string ensembles, and keeps time with a tantan during soft songs. He sings the tenor part in the vocal quartet, and his rich voice provides melody on soft songs and harmonies on most others.

Adagio also has a talent for musical composition and aids Bonnie in writing melodies and harmonies for instrumental and vocal numbers.

Coastal Waters

3rd Level Female Human Bard

STR: 9
INT: 13
WIS: 14
DEX: 18
CON: 11
CHA: 16
AC Normal: 6
AC Rear: 10
Hit Points: 15
Alignment: Neutral Good
Age: 18
Weapon Proficiencies: Quarterstaff, Kusari-gama
Nonweapon Proficiencies: Singing (16), Musical Instrument (Yarting, Bandore, Harp) (17), Dancing (18)
Bard Abilities: Climb Walls 50%; Detect Noise 30%; Pick Pockets 45%; Read Languages 20%; Influence Audience Reactions, Inspire Allies, Legend Lore
Languages: Common, Dwarvish, Elvish, Orcish
Magic Items: *Quarterstaff +1, Nithanalor's harp* (which she does not know is magic)
Spells/day: 2

Spell Book

Level One Spells

Amplify	*Audible Glamer*
Color Spray	*Distort*
Light	*Phantasmal Force*
Read Magic	*Wall of Fog*

Appearance: Coastal stands 5'8" tall and weighs 138 pounds. She wears her dark hair short in a masculine style. Her brown eyes are intense, and she sometimes wears a monocle over her left eye to help her read music. Her clothing generally consists of gray trousers, a red tunic, a long dark cloak, and short, soft boots.

Background: Coastal was raised in Ravens Bluff by her elderly grandmother. They were very poor, and Costella, which was her given name, considered herself lucky when she acquired a shabby old yarting from a pawn shop for a few copper pieces. She first used her musical talents on street corners, singing well-known ballads and gaining a few coins from passersby. After a time, she began writing her own songs, mostly sad tunes dealing with the poor and the old who surrounded her. It was these songs that attracted the attention of Bonnie and Adagio.

Coastal still sings melodies on most of the group's songs, and often sings lead. She has a low, sultry voice that quickly hushes a crowded room. She often exaggerates her pronunciations and adds a gravelly quality to her voice.

She plays her yarting for many songs, although she plays bandore for abstract songs, harp for slow songs, and any of her instruments in the string ensemble. She enjoys playing her harp, one of the fabled harps of Myth Drannor, a *Nithanalor's harp*. It is made of dark red wood, polished to a glossy finish and inlaid with ivory and gold. When she plays the instrument, she and her possessions are affected as if by a *stoneskin* spell, making her virtually invulnerable to attack. She received the harp as a gift from an elderly cousin, and she does not know about its magical properties. Elminster of Shadowdale has expressed an interest in acquiring such an item (see "Airs of Ages Past" in DRAGON® Magazine issue 115 for more information).

Coastal sometimes composes songs, although she has great difficulty if the subject matter is other than the aged or poor. Usually, she just provides a key phrase or chord when William, Adagio, and Bonnie are stuck.

Drake Bluenote

2nd Level Male Human Bard

STR: 12
INT: 17
WIS: 15
DEX: 13
CON: 12
CHA: 15
AC Normal: 10
AC Rear: 10
Hit Points: 7
Alignment: Neutral
Age: 23
Weapon Proficiencies: Long sword,

Footman's Mace
Nonweapon Proficiencies: Singing (15), Musical Instrument (glaur, birdpipe, songhorn, lute) (12), Reading/Writing (Common, Elvish, Music) (14)
Bard Abilities: Climb Walls 50%; Detect Noise 20%; Pick Pockets 10%; Read Languages 40%; Influence Audience Reactions, Inspire Allies, Legend Lore
Languages: Common, Dwarvish, Elvish, Orcish
Spells/day: 1

Spell Book

Level One Spells

Amplify	*Charm Person*
Read Magic	*Taunt*

Appearance: Drake is tall and thin, standing 6'4" and weighing 160 pounds. His long dark hair flows almost to his shoulders, and his blue eyes sit above a large nose and a long, curly black mustache. He wears sedate clothing, usually brown breeches, a light tunic, and high, black boots.

Background: Drake was raised in a wealthy household in the merchant district of Procampur. Unlike the other members of the group, he does not see much wrong with the way things are in the Realms, and has no problem with the poor being poor. When his wanderings brought him to the Living City, he heard the band play and decided it might be fun to have a job for a change, especially one where he could perform.

An excellent horn player, he plays for fun and initially paid little attention to the band's lyrics about human rights and the suffering of the poor. The other members eventually confronted him, asking who or what he cared for. He hastily mumbled a reply about liking animals, and that seemed to suffice. Adagio made Drake the group's primary spokesman on animal rights. Although he really does like animals, his first concern is music, and the rebellious attitudes of the other members often make him uncomfortable. As long as there is a fairly steady income and a lot of travel, however, he is satisfied to remain with the band.

Drake enjoys travel and is always listening and watching for new songs to add to his extensive songbook. He has become the band's official scribe and copies their new songs into his book as well, providing music for the other members as required.

Drake also contributes significantly to the group's overall performances, playing glaur for mock music, birdpipe for abstract tunes, and songhorn for soft songs. Although less proficient with it, Drake also plays the lute on a few songs, such as ballads and those done by the string ensemble.

Drake's voice is a proud and operatic baritone, largely untrained. He sings melodies on ballads and the bass line in the vocal quartet.

William Windsprinter

2nd Level Male Human Bard

STR: 14
INT: 14
WIS: 16
DEX: 17
CON: 13
CHA: 15
AC Normal: 5
AC Rear: 8
Hit Points: 12
Alignment: Chaotic Neutral
Age: 17
Weapon Proficiencies: Whip, Nunchaku
Nonweapon Proficiencies: Artistic Ability (poetry) (16), Musical Instrument (tocken, tantan, hand-drum, dulcimer) (16), Languages, Modern (Thri-kreen) (14)
Bard Abilities: Climb Walls 70%; Detect Noise 20%; Pick Pockets 30%; Read Languages 5%; Influence Audience Reactions, Inspire Allies, Legend Lore
Languages: Common, Dwarvish, Elvish, Orcish
Spells/day: 1

Spell Book

Level One Spells

Amplify	*Cantrip*
Friends	*Hypnotism*
Jump	*Read Magic*
Sleep	*Ventriloquism*

Appearance: William stands 5'5" tall and weighs 130 pounds. He wears his black hair very short, except for a tall, one-inch wide strip from ear to ear over the crown of his head. His dark brown eyes bulge over a large nose and a wide mouth. William dresses almost completely in black leather, except for an occasional white tunic. His leather gloves, trousers, vest, and jacket act as leather armor.

Background: William grew up in a small community at the edge of the Great Desert of Anauroch. Life there was very tough for him, with attacks from humanoids, thri-kreen, and the desert itself. When his family was killed by thri-kreen, he left the area for the land to the south and west. He eventually arrived in Ravens Bluff, where he met Coastal Waters and later joined the group which became Adagio Jones and The Goodwinds.

William has two moods, exuberant and sullen. When the band is not playing or practicing, he is often somewhere getting into trouble with wild stunts and mischievous pranks. He is happiest when playing music.

He plays hand-drum during ballads, tantan during abstract numbers, and dulcimer for soft songs and the string ensemble. His favorite instrument is his tocken, which is made of phandar, a greenish-brown wood with thin, black grain lines (see "Woodlands of the Realms," DRAGON® Magazine issue 125 for more information). He plays tocken for mock music and to support the vocal quartet.

William does not sing with the group because he cannot carry a tune.

William has a talent for lyrics. He and Bonnie write the words for mock music. Further, he has an unexpected talent for writing slow, soft songs. He is greatly concerned with the environment, particularly the spread of the Great Desert. He also advocates universal political rights for all sentient beings. ❑

Bring Your Game To Life

Paint Miniatures For Your Adventures

by Larry "Mac" McAbee

Role playing games are games of imagination. We have a mental picture of our characters, we visualize the events and locations the DM describes to us, and we imagine what it must look like when a *fireball* or similar spell goes off. It is even argued that one of the best features of the games are their ability to stimulate creativity. There are times, however, when it is much more convenient to have a tangible representation of characters, creatures, and the action taking place.

One of the easiest and most enjoyable ways to accomplish this is through the use of miniature figures. Marching orders are easily represented, and can quickly be changed as circumstances dictate; combat situations are much less confusing when players see where the enemy is; and tactical options, which could well be overlooked in a verbal description, become much more apparent.

Frequently, miniatures are not used in gaming sessions because no one in the gaming group feels qualified to paint them. Painting lead figures is not as formidable a task as people seem to think. All that is required is some patience, a reasonable sense of color, and the mastery of a few basic and relatively simple techniques.

Getting Started

For the beginner, an initial investment of less than $30.00 will be enough to obtain the basic materials. These essential items include a good hobby knife, two to four quality brushes, primer, a selection of paints, and some type of fixative or protective coating.

Since the molds for casting metal miniatures are used many times, figures sometimes have "flash" which must be removed. Flash is a thin piece of metal found in areas where material has leaked between the halves of the mold. Even when the two halves of the mold meet tightly, they may not line up exactly and may leave "part lines" molded into the figure. A sharp hobby knife can remove these imperfections. An X-Acto No. 1 knife (or the equivalent) with a No. 11 blade, which can be purchased for about $2.00, is probably the most effective tool for cleaning miniatures. Flash can be easily cut away, and the blade is slim enough to reach the most inaccessible areas. Part lines usually can be scraped off using the back side of the blade so you do not dull the cutting edge. If you decide to continue collecting and painting miniatures, you might consider purchasing a set of miniature hobby files. A set of eight files, in a variety of shapes, will cost between $10.00 and $12.00. They will speed the cleaning process considerably, particularly if you are working with larger figures.

The ease of painting a miniature figure and the appearance of the finished product depends on the quality of your brushes. Good quality sable brushes are expensive, but nothing will frustrate a beginning painter more quickly than trying to do fine detail work with a cheap brush.

Purchased individually, prices for the brushes will range from $2.00 to $4.00. You will need at least two brushes, one in the 5/0 to 10/0 range for small details and a 1/0 or 2/0 to cover larger areas. If you plan to use a brush-on primer, you should also purchase a large, inexpensive brush to use for priming. A No. 2 round is very well suited for this purpose. Another less expensive brush in the 1/0 to 3/0 range also would be a wise investment for a technique called dry brushing. Very experienced painters buy larger, more expensive brushes and use their fine points to paint details.

Suitable brushes can be found at most hobby shops that carry miniatures and at craft and art supply dealers.

Choosing Paint

Many paints used for metal miniatures will not adhere well to bare metal. To avoid this problem, prime your miniatures. Several good primers are available in brush-on and spray types. An excellent spray primer specifically for metal miniatures is marketed by Floquil and costs about $4.00 for a 5 oz. can. A can contains enough to coat 40 to 50 figures. Testors spray enamels for model cars and planes in flat white or flat black also make good primers and cost less than $2.00 a can. **Do not** use an automotive primer, as they are specifically designed to hide small imperfections and will obliterate the details on a figure. Also, if you are using a spray primer, plan to use it outdoors because of the fumes.

When purchasing paint, there are three basic choices: enamels, acrylics, or oils. Beginning painters should use acrylics. There are several excellent brands of acrylic paints on the market which offer a wide variety of colors and are reasonably priced. Acrylic paints also have the advantage of being water based. Paints may be thinned with water if necessary, and soap and water are the only things required for cleaning brushes or accidental spills. Acrylic paints require a protective coating if they are used on figures that will be handled frequently. Enamels are more durable, but are not as widely available. Futhermore, they require a volatile liquid for thinning and cleaning. Many contest painters have started using oils for their figures because the medium allows for subtle shading and blending. Oils, however, also require a volatile thinner and are extremely slow drying. Like acrylics, oils require a sealing coat if the figures are to be used for gaming.

Purchased individually, acrylic colors will run from $1.00 to $1.50 a bottle depending on the color and the brand selected. The beginner should consider the following colors for their initial work: black, white, red, green, blue, yellow, dark brown, flesh, metallic silver, and metallic gold. This will yield a variety of colors and shades. For those who decide to use acrylics, there are two tricks you might consider trying. First, put two or three BBs in each bottle of paint. These increase the mixing effect when you shake the jar. The paints also will flow more smoothly if you add one or two drops of liquid detergent to each color.

If you plan to use a miniature for gaming that has been painted with acrylics or oils, make sure you apply a clear, protective coating over the paint. Handling an uncoated figure causes the paint to wear off. Like primers, sealing coats are available in spray and brush-on varieties. Choose a sealer that dries to a flat or matte finish. A gloss finish on cloaks, pouches, skin, and most clothing will give your miniature an unreal-

istic appearance. Spray coatings for acrylic paints can be found at most hobby and craft shops and at art supply dealers for about $5.00 a can. This may seem to be a rather high price, but a can this size will be enough for approximately 100 man-sized figures.

Selecting Miniatures

Obviously, you will need at least one miniature to paint, and your selection here can also affect the success of your first effort. Try to find a figure that resembles one of your familiar characters. Considering the many fine and extensive lines of 25mm figures available, that should not be difficult. By selecting a miniature that is similar to one of your PCs you will already have a strong mental image of what the figure should look like. This will help you make color selections for various parts of the figure, and it should provide an additional motivation to see the project through to completion.

In addition to the items listed above, you will need a few items from around the house. Collect a few soft, absorbent rags for wiping brushes, two small containers for water (one for thinning and one for cleaning brushes), a small piece of wood or cardboard (slightly larger than the base of your figure) and some white glue or rubber cement. An old toothbrush will also be useful for cleaning figures prior to painting.

Ready, Set, Paint

Once you have your materials assembled, find an open, well-lighted work area. You will want an area large enough to have all your materials at hand without things being cluttered. Try to find a place where your materials can be left out for some time without disrupting life for other members of the family and, if possible, an area which is not frequented by young children or family pets. Cat hair and small fingerprints on a freshly painted figure will not produce effects you will be pleased with. Ideally, the light in your work area should be behind you and slightly to one side. Finally, unless you are using an area already set aside for hobby work, spread out a few old newspapers to minimize damage and make clean up easier in case of accidental spills.

Now you should be ready to begin. Consider the entire process step by step. First, examine the figure carefully for flash or part lines, and cut or scrape them away using your hobby knife. Be careful not to remove any of the details of the casting during this process. Once any such imperfections have been eliminated, wash the figure with soap and warm water to remove any metal shavings, mold release residue, and oil from your skin. Scrub the figure with an old toothbrush if you have one, rinse it thoroughly, and dry the miniature with an absorbent cloth. Do not touch the figure again with your bare hands. Touching the piece with your bare fingers will deposit body oils on the metal which will interfere with the ability of the paint to stick to the metal. Handle the figure with a clean cloth while you attach it to some type of temporary holder, such as a piece of scrap wood or cardboard. This will keep your fingers off the figure and out of the way and will allow you to hold the figure in a variety of different positions without getting paint all over yourself. For example, I prefer to attach the figure with rubber cement or white glue to the end of a piece of 1/4" dowel about 2" long.

Now you should be ready to prime the figure. If you are using a spray primer, use it outdoors and make sure that any spray which misses the miniature does not hit something else. Follow the directions for the primer. Some spray primers recommend a drying time of 24 hours before you begin to paint over them; some require only that the primer is dry. If you are using a brush-on primer try to get an even coat on the entire figure. Primers tend to thicken more than ordinary paints, so you will need to be careful that you do not use too much and obscure the small details. Primers are available in white, gray, and black, and there are some differences in results depending on the color selected. Colors applied over a white or light gray primer tend to appear brighter. The use of a dark primer will generally produce final tones which appear deeper and more ominous. I consistently use a black primer on figures that I want to appear somber or threatening. Whatever type and color of primer you choose, be sure to cover all parts of the figure. When you are satisfied that you have left no bare spots, set the piece aside until the primer has dried thoroughly.

Pay Attention To Detail

One of the ways we recognize detail in real life depends on the shadows on the item we are looking at. On a well-made miniature figure there are many small details cast into it. However, these details are so small that they do not cast enough shadow to bring them to our attention. To make the figures look as realistic as possible, we need to enhance the shadows. If you have used a white or gray primer on your miniature, your next step should be to emphasize the areas of the figure where major shadows would appear. Examine the figure and pick out places where there would be deep shadows on a full-size person, such as in deep folds in cloaks, and around the edges of backpacks, pouches, belts, other pieces of equipment. Simply paint these areas black using a medium-sized brush. When the final colors are put on the figure, part of this black paint will be left uncovered to enhance the shadow effect and to outline and emphasize small details. Obviously, if you used a black primer on your figure this step will not be necessary.

Once a figure has been cleaned, primed, and shadowed, you must decide what portion of the figure to paint first. The three basic items you will need to consider are accessibility, layering, and color.

The more complex and detailed a figure is, the more likely it is to have areas which simply cannot be painted without getting paint on some other part of the figure. You will save yourself a great deal of frustration by always painting these difficult-to-reach-areas first. Learn to recognize these portions of the figure; they usually are evident during the initial shadowing process, and make a mental note to begin with these areas. When you consider skin, clothing, belts, and other trappings, it is usually easiest to paint the innermost layers first, then progress to the outermost layers—almost like painting clothing and trappings in the order someone would put them on.

Make A Color Statement

Color selection also affects your painting. When painting adjacent areas, paint the lighter color first—even though it may be the outer of two layers. By painting lighter colored areas first, you will avoid accidently painting over an already-painted darker color.

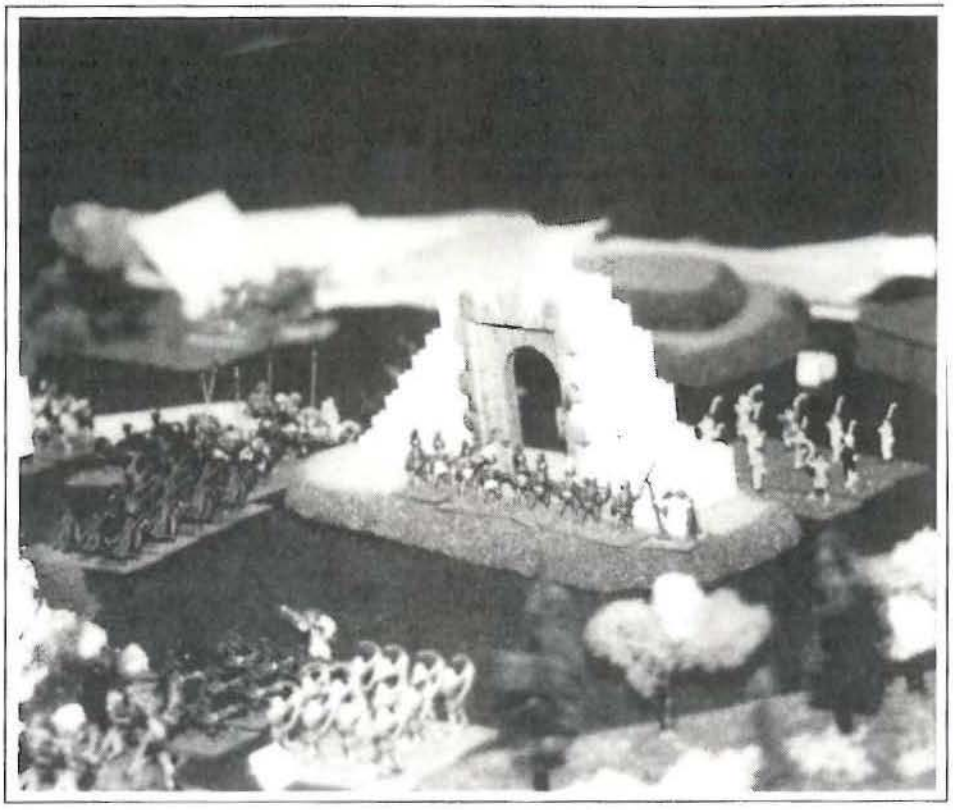
To make your figure appear as realistic as possible, each major feature of the miniature should be painted in three shades. In addition to the main color you have selected for an area, you will need a darker shade to bring out

shadows and depth and a shade lighter color to bring out highlights and to enhance fine details. Once the basic color for a section has been selected, mix a slightly darker shade of that color by adding a small amount of black or dark brown. Use this darker shade for your first coat, concentrating on those areas which would receive the least light. If the shadowing process mentioned earlier has been used, do not completely cover all of the black in the deepest recesses. Next, use the natural shade of the basic color, leaving the darker shade exposed in the shadowed areas. Finally, you need to bring out the highlights in those areas which would normally receive the most light. For this, mix a slightly lighter shade of the basic color by adding small amounts of white. When you apply this highlight color, you should still have large areas of the basic color visible.

A commonly used technique for highlighting is dry brushing. Pick up a small amount of your lighter shade on the brush. Then, on a rag or piece of scrap paper, wipe most of the paint off the brush. Pull the now almost dry brush very lightly across the surface, and a small quantity of paint will be deposited on only the raised details of the figure. This technique can be very effective in bringing out fine details, but it is hard on brushes. Even if you purchased a less expensive brush for this purpose, be sure to thoroughly clean your brush immediately with water and liquid soap. Dried paint builds up on the bristles of brushes used for dry brushing more rapidly than on other brushes.

When you have finished painting the outer layer of your miniature, presuming you have been working by layers, examine the entire figure and do any necessary touch-up work. If you find that some of the smaller details do not stand out well on the figure, you could try to outline those items using black or dark brown paint and your smallest brush. Your paint should be thinned slightly more than usual, and you should add a very small amount of liquid detergent to make the paint flow smoothly.

When you are satisfied that the painting process is complete you will be ready to apply your protective coating. Again, be sure you have selected one which dries to a flat finish. If you are using a spray finish, use it outdoors. When using a spray finish, or primer for that matter, it is a good idea to clear the nozzle of the spray can when you are finished. Paint or sealant which remains in the spray nozzle will dry there and clog the spray can making it unusable long before it is empty. Each time you finish using a spray can, turn the can upside down and press the button. Hold the button down until all the paint or sealant is forced out of the nozzle and nothing is coming out except pressurized gas. Now there is nothing left in the spray mechanism to dry and clog it, and your primer or sealant will be ready for use the next time you paint.



Review Of Techniques

These basic painting steps can be used for all types of figures. Remember to:

1. Remove all flash and part lines.

2. Wash the figure and mount it on a temporary holder.

3. Prime the figure.

4. Enhance shadowy areas.

5. Paint most inaccessible areas first.

6. Paint basic features by layers doing inner layers first.

7. Dry brush the figure to bring out highlights and details.

8. Check the figure and do any touch ups if necessary.

9. Seal the figure with a clear, protective coating.

HINTS: Add two or three BBs to each paint container.

Add a drop or two of liquid detergent to your water-baseed acrylic paints.

Clear the nozzle of spray cans before storing.

Finally, try not to be overly critical of your first attempt at miniature painting. Like any other activity, skills improve with practice. Your basic techniques will become better the more often you paint, and you will learn something new with each figure. Don't be afraid to try new methods or materials. If you are not satisfied with the results, simply clean the paint off the figure and start again. Several of my favorite miniatures have been repainted three or four times. Look at miniatures displayed at conventions and talk to the artists. These people were once beginners, too, and most of them will be happy to answer questions or make suggestions to help. In addition to adding a new dimension to your gaming, miniature painting can be an enjoyable and satisfying hobby between playing sessions.

The Art of Magic

A Look at How the Ars Magica Game Works

by Mark Rein-Hagen and Lisa Stevens

It was the age of magic, a time of darkness and dread. Rome, the city of gold, had fallen centuries before to the barbarian onslaught, which in its wake left only war and death, plaque and famine. The knights' fierce courage and the priests' prayers could do little to chase the monsters and demons from the earth. But on the outskirts of what was left of civilization there dwelled a mystical order of wizards who studied ancient lore—the art of magic. Most of these powerful sorcerers sought to restore knowledge to the world. But among those wizards there was one who was different, the one who was known as Lupus Mortus, the wolf of death. It is his story that shall be told.

Wizards are unlike all others in this dark world; they are dedicated to arcane and esoteric pursuits and they still understand the ancient ways. As legendary sages of unrivaled powers and lore, these sorcerers face the perils that others avoid and more dare not even dream of. Gathered together as the enigmatic Order of Hermes, these wizards struggle against persecution from those who do not care to understand their art, and against internal intrigue. Their enemies are legion. Though magic pervades their medieval world, only these few gifted individuals, after years of thankless apprenticeship, have ever mastered Ars Magica, the art of magic.

In the game, you are a magus, not just a simple caster of spells. Your character is a dedicated and educated practitioner of potent magical arts. As wizards, player characters stand in stark contrast to the brutal medieval society around them. While most folk are ignorant, largely illiterate, bound to a decadent church hierarchy, and fearful of all that lies beyond civilization; PCs are learned, creative, free from superstition, and willing to dare the mysteries that surround them.

Though tied to his studies, occasionally a magus ventures forth to gather magical ingredients for enchantments, to obtain new knowledge, to solve mysteries, or to assist those who warrant his aid. On these journeys, a PC is accompanied by friends and companions, and protected by mercenary guards. These exacting expeditions are the heart of the game, and (as with most role-playing games) letting you tell the stories of these journeys is the object.

The wolf slipped through the woods as the fading morning fog rippled through the trees. Dewy fragrances caressed the canine's nostrils as it started a hare from its morning browsing. When it detected the scent of man, the wolf knew it was nearing its destination. Entering a clearing atop a low hill, it could see the spires of the Cathedral a half mile off, its bells glistening in the sun. Sniffing the wind once again, and then throating a deep, low growl, the wolf sat back on its haunches. Slowly the body grew; the paws became fingers and the muzzle a disfigured human face. As Lupus Mortus, Arch-Magus, rose to his feet, a sly smile came across his twisted visage. There was work to be done today, an old friend awaited him in the city below.

Mythic Europe

The Ars Magica game offers a fresh look at a familiar world. In the game you can experience the middle ages, a world of superstitious peasants, greedy nobles, and distracted priests, but as seen through the eyes of those who face the supernatural every day. By focusing on the wizard, the game is able to evoke the setting and feel of the fantasy world in a way that hasn't been done before. It is a game of new characters, new settings, and new challenges.

The game doesn't attempt to describe every aspect of the world in detail, it's the wizards (and their companions) who are described in detail. If you want a game that encompasses everything fantasy, then you can find plenty of games that attempt to do just that, games which include every character type and were designed for every possible setting. By choosing to make the setting that of wizards in Mythic Europe a different course was chosen for the Ars Magica game. This is the medieval world of magic and myth, with wizards as its focal point (just like thieves were the focal point in the old game, Thieves Guild). However, this setting is not purely historical, it is mythical and it is meant to evoke a certain flavor and grandeur.

Mythic Europe is the way medieval folk looked at historical Europe—it is as magical as they thought it to be. It has dragons, unicorns, satyrs, faerie queens, and even poetic justice. The common folk deal with the supernatural, though more infrequently than the wizards. Charms and saints' relics protect them from the evil eye, prayers hold at bay the invisible demons who stalk villages at night, and ancient curses haunt them. The peasants have not entirely abandoned their pagan past either, they may leave food on rune-covered boulders for the forest spirits, but then go to church to pray for forgiveness. The world is shrouded in mysteries and secrets untold, and is alive with magical significance. It makes for a complete and detailed setting for a fantasy role-playing game.

In creating Mythic Europe, an effort was made to go back to the original sources for fantasy literature, the myths and faerie tales of medieval Europe. Because of this, Mythic Europe is likely to be the most dynamic and romantic fantasy setting you have played in a long time, and best of all, information on it is only as far away as the nearest encyclopedia or library.

The city was a hive of commotion and bustle, as merchants hawked their wares, peasants carted in the harvest, and young boys in bright tunics ran messages for their masters. The city was alive, vital, but the dark, hooded figure that stalked through its streets did not appear to notice any of it. He walked steadily and precisely down the middle of the road, looking neither to the right or left. The man was searching for someone, someone whom he had not seen in some time, for he wished to pay him a little visit. This was the sole reason he had come back to this city. Because of his arcane powers, he did not need to ask for directions; he walked along knowing exactly where he would find his old friend. Nothing would get in his way this time.

Magic

In Ars Magica, magic is everywhere, and its existence affects every detail of life — usually in subtle ways. Magic is a mysterious and mercurial force, not a precise science that can be harnessed to the whims of mortals. Magic in this world is not so much casting balls of fire as it is a different way of thinking about the world. Magic is the ability to manipulate the supernatural, to comprehend the invisible connections that bind everything together.

The game's magic rules are designed to fulfill the promise of magic's mystery and potency, and is the heart of the game. The magic rules also are designed to be coherent and logical, with a scholarly feel, and to give the game atmosphere with flavor and elegance.

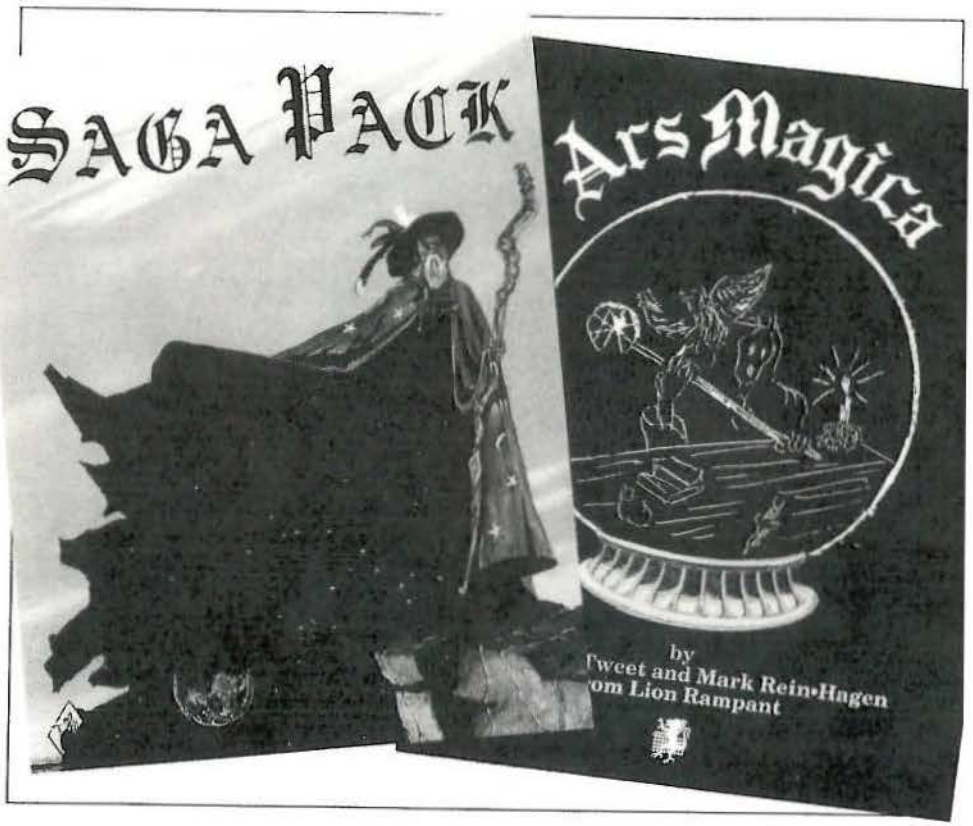
Wizards can use formulaic spells—precisely defined spells, which have been slowly memorized over years (but never forgotten), and spontaneous magic — improvised spells, cast off the cuff to create nearly any sort of effect. While unreliable and slow, spontaneous magic is much more adaptable than formulaic magic.

The system is based on 15 magical Arts, which are composed of five Techniques and 10 Forms, all of which are referred to by their Latin names. For each combination of Form and Technique, there are provided a number of spells as examples which offer many side effects and powers.

To wield magic in the game is to control a very fickle but potent force. While working magic is a simple procedure, there are a wide variety of ways to modify the style of casting or even the effects. You can fast cast; multi cast; ritually cast; make targeting, finesse, or concentration rolls; use raw power; cast from a text; cast without voice or gestures; and even perfect your formulaic spells by mastering them.

Between adventures, magi work in their laboratories, which provides for some excellent play. Wizards can study skills and expand their lore, advance their mastery of the various arts, invent or learn a formulaic spell, train an apprentice, create a familiar, or create potions and magical devices. While the rules for laboratory work are simple, they provide for dramatic effects and allow for careful calculation, cleverness, and risk taking to affect results.

Wizards often resort to magical duels, which are called Certamen. Certamen is a satisfying, colorful, and non-fatal way for wizards to resolve their conflicts.



The Magi are exceedingly powerful in the game, as formidable as they are in legend. Even a beginning magus wields powers far beyond that of a mortal. Magic, however, is not all powerful, for it is an earthly force, and as such can only affect things beneath the lunar sphere—things on Earth, and below. Magic can never affect the moon or anything beyond it. Nor can magic change anyone's true nature. Within those limits, however, magic is a powerful force.

A group of urchins began to follow the hooded man, increasingly curious about this strange traveler who did not deign to notice them. They began to tease him, becoming more and more brazen until finally one of them threw a rotten turnip. It struck the man's cloak with a smack. The traveler stopped and slowly turned to face his tormentors. Old memories stirred. He slowly pulled off his cowl so the urchins could see who he was. Their smiles melted as they recognized the infamous, scarred face of Lupus Mortus, with wisps of smoke rising from his cloak—the wolf had returned. Before they had a chance to run, Lupus began to cast a spell. "Creo Ignem et Aurum." As they raced away from him, a wave of flame spread from his outstretched fingers, and washed over the children. Their clothing smoldering with the flames, the pack ran away in terror, their screaming awakening the entire city.

Lupus pulled his hood back over his head, and allowed a shadow of a smile to cross his face. Yes, he would have to answer for this, the other wizards would certainly call a tribunal this time, but the delight of this occasion would make it all worthwhile. Lupus turned and made his way back toward the gate, but with no great speed. He hoped there would be cause to test his powers yet again.

Innovations

The Ars Magica game is not just about magic, it is a game about role-playing. It uses the rules to give play depth and flavor.

The Covenant

Wizards live in a hostile world, so they gather in covenants to share resources and provide a common defense. The covenant is a home for them, and for all their retainers, companions, and friends.

The covenant serves as the home base

from which most adventures begin and to which the characters return when the story is over. The covenant is similar to a famous medieval institution, the monastery. In both, intelligent people have gathered to study, separated from the distractions of mundane life, and are free to delve deeply into the mysteries they explore. This security lets players forget about the small details in a character's life and leaves them free to concentrate on the story.

Troupe Style Play

The game and the world setting are not just the responsibilities of the game master, but of the entire gaming group. Much like a company of actors, the group switches roles not only as characters, but as gamemasters, too. Everyone helps in creating the world and designing the covenant, and works at developing the dramatic value of the campaign. Many gaming groups have been role playing this way for some time, but the Ars Magica game is the first to be specially designed for this style of play. You do not have to play the game this way, but the rules provide suggestions and ideas for doing so.

Ars Magica is also a storytelling game. Good players do not just play or gamemaster well, but also help weave a good story.

Mood and Flavor

The rules evoke the flavor of the middle ages in many ways. Many aspects of medieval life are integral to the game.

The Church is found throughout medieval society, for it is the keystone which holds everything together. Without the dominion of the church and the power it extends to oppose other powers, the common folk would not have protection against demons, faeries, or any form of magic. Companions can have faith points (instead of confidence points) which allows them to ask for miracles, and there are a plethora of holy relics to be found (some of immense power, others that are fakes). All in all, the Church is a mighty institution, and the Order of Hermes strives to stay out of its way.

The faeries are a central element. They are inscrutable, enigmatic, and difficult to understand. They are intelligent, capricious creatures that are intimately connected with nature. Every type of natural area, outside of the Church's dominion, has its own variety of faeries. Expeditions into faerie forests, glades, or dells are always exciting and dangerous, but are filled with charm and whimsy, too.

It is impossible to escape the bounds of demonic influence, for demons in search of souls can be found everywhere. Though they do not normally make themselves apparent and visible, they are still able to cause great evil and anguish. Demons are among the most potent enemies of the Order, and their seductive powers can corrupt the most powerful of wizards.

What's Up at Lion Rampant

The Lion Rampant staff has a number of new products on the schedule for the next year:

The Broken Covenant of Calebias: This product has been revised and updated for the second edition of the Ars Magica game, and given with a new, color cover. The "missing" convenant chapter has been restored, and a more complete description of *The Bell of Ibyn* has been included.

Story Paths: Our original *Whimsy Cards* have long been sold out. This new version adds whimsy and new themes and moods. By July, we'll have five new packs released. Thereafter, we'll release a new one every month.

Order of Hermes: The long-awaited supplement detailing this mysterious organization of wizards will be released this summer. Details on the original Code of Hermes (the rules all wizards must live by), and the peripheral code are just part of the material included. This supplement is a must for all Ars Magica Players.

Barcelona: The first in a new line of *Mythic Europe* accessories, *Barcelona* provides everything needed for a detailed exploration of this intriguing city and cultural center.

Wizard's Tribunal: The first in a series of game aids aimed at helping to promote role playing without rules. *Wizard's Tribunal* allows you to get into character and stay in character for the duration of the story, never needing to drop out of character to look up rules or to roll dice (combat is not encouraged). **We will run a *Wizard's Tribunal* at the GEN CON® Game Fair in slots 04 and 08. These sessions are sanctioned by the RPGA™ Network and are open only to Network members, who will have an opportunity to play before the public ever sees the product. Come join us at the Game Fair and see what role playing was meant to be.**

Battle Music: Did you ever notice that a movie's soundtrack helps get you in the proper mood to enjoy what's on the screen? *Battle Music* is the first in a series of cassette tapes made in conjunction with Matchbook Productions. They allow gamers to choose their own soundtracks for their gaming sessions.

Other Products: We'll have an Ars Magica rules supplement from Stewart Wieck, editor of *White Wolf* magazine, and two Ars Magica adventures from Bill Armintrout and Thomas Kane of Jovialis.

Other News

The biggest news at the Lion Rampant office is our upcoming move to the Atlanta area. We have recently added several employees and are stepping up production. One of our writers, Dan Fox, has a new role playing game called *Hahlmabrea,* which has a simple and enjoyable rules system. Riddles and puns abound, making Dan's game less serious and more *fun.* We have added a new artist to our staff, Ed Graves. Ed's work already has earned praise in the art community. Mark is working on a role playing game where characters from multiple universes meet in the afterlife, a limbo where few would like to spend eternity.

On the European front, the Ars Magica game has hit it big in France and Germany, and we have translations in the works for both languages. We know of a number of players throughout Europe, and we are willing to put other players in touch with them.

Finally, we would like to get your feedback: What would you like to see in a role playing game? Would you like to see our magic system published as a separate supplement usable with any game system? We would appreciate any comments or ideas you have about our products, both published and forthcoming. Our address:

Lion Rampant
#6 Twin Branch Road
Buford, GA 30518

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The Everwinking Eye

Elminster's Guide To The Forgotten Realms™ Campaign Setting

by Ed Greenwood

"What is most important, of all I can tell thee of the Realms?" Elminster posed, arching an eyebrow. "The awe and wonder and mystery ye find there, of course. For if ye have not these things, what have ye? Mere survival. And while survival is a wondrous thing—sometimes a *most* wondrous thing—it is but the rock upon which all else must stand. A rock is proud and hard, but also a thing cold and bare. So keep well awe and wonder and mystery—and know delight and excitement all thy days."

I sighed and asked the Old Mage how much of the Forgotten Realms he had not yet told me about. In reply, Elminster just winked— hence this column's title.

The old sage and I have been pretty busy lately; the steadily growing interest in the Realms has kept us busy answering queries about fashion, everyday speech, military and political matters (and just who *really* holds power, behind the scenes and various thrones), popular recipes — and many, many other things.

This has made the rambling, testy old mage even more scatter-tongued than usual; I've taken to running several tape recorders at all times during his visits, so that the overlapping tapes will pick up every murmur he utters. Little bits and pieces on topics not easily incorporated into other articles or projects from TSR (such as those people, places, and things we could only sketchily cover in the crammed pages of the boxed *Campaign Set* and the *FORGOTTEN REALMS™ Adventures* rulebook) I've set down herein, below and in columns to follow.

The Realmslore in this installment can add life and color to any campaign set in Faerun and provides DMs with valuable background information. It can even spark additional adventures for characters who become involved with the topic at hand (or "under the tongue," as Elminster says). I'm afraid I can't reproduce the Old Mage's wry, distinguished tone, flashing eyes, and droll mimicry, but I hope you'll enjoy my written renderings of his ramblings as we explore the Realms together. I'll certainly ask Elminster about topics of particular interest to Network members — if you'll let me know what you want to read about.

Maskyr's Tale

For this first foray, I've collected together all Elminster would tell me of the beginnings of Maskyr's Eye, a picturesque, overgrown little village just north of *The Vast*, in the lands east of The Dragon Reach. It's just one of many places in the Realms that has much to intrigue and fascinate the scholar and adventurer alike.

Some seven hundred years ago, the archmage Maskyr came to the vale where Maskyr's Eye now stands. In those days, men were few north of the Inner Sea, and they went quietly and well-armed about their business. Maskyr was exploring, looking for a place far from the affairs of men where he could build himself a tower. He found a certain wooded vale to his liking. It was shrouded in mountain-mists when he came upon it one morn. It lay quiet and beautiful, and he decided that he would make his home there.

In those days, the beast-men (ogres) held Thar, and goblinkind were few east of The Dragon Reach. Dwarves held the lands east of The Dragon Reach from where Mulmaster now stands to what is now eastern Impiltur. King among the dwarves then was Tuir, called "Stonebeard" for his grim stoicism and slow humor.

Tuir sat his throne deep under Mount Grimmerfang, where the dwarves had once slain an orc-king to seize control of these lands (just what mountain this was is unknown to men today, kept secret by dwarven elders). Maskyr sought audience with Tuir in his halls one day and asked the Deep King his price for the vale. At his words, there was silence.

Maskyr had learned patience in long years of seeking out and experimenting with the Art (magic), and so he leaned upon his staff and held his peace, cloaking himself in silence and waiting. His eyes met the stony gaze of the Deep King.

Tuir stroked his beard in thought for a time. He could see that this human must command the Art. Yet, he was loathe to give up any land to humans, especially powerful mages who he trusted not at all.

Finally, he gruffly said, "The vale is yours, from rim to rim and beneath the grass as deep as four men stand upon each other's shoulders, so long as ye dig so as to remain within the valley's borders—upon one condition only. Pluck out thy right eye and give it here to me, without hesitation or violence, and the vale is thine."

And to the astonishment of the Court, Maskyr did. The bargain was kept. Tuir, with new respect for this human (he never thought anyone would pay such a price), commanded that no dwarf disturb the archmage's studies nor intrude upon his borders. Maskyr the One-Eyed lived contentedly alone in the valley for several hundred years until he vanished (presumably slain) while on an interplanar journey.

During that time, the power of the dwarves waned, orcs came again to the northern Vast, and humans came in numbers to hurl back all other creatures and claim the Vast for their own.

Maskyr's Tower stood atop a rocky bluff that rises out of the woods like the prow of a ship, facing northeast to the twin peaks known locally as the Coldstars. Small, rugged, and unadorned, it was soon visited by adventurers who had heard the tale of Maskyr's bargain with the dwarves. But none of them could pass the wards of force that Maskyr had left guarding the tower's door and windows, and the adventurers went away empty-handed.

Mankind came north. The land in the mist-dampened valley was cleared for farms, and several adventurers settled nearby in retirement. Every now and again one of the retired adventurers would ride up to the tower and test its wards, seeking some weakness they had not found before. None appeared, and the patience of one man, the warrior Gathen, grew short as the years followed one after another.

At last Gathen rode to Mulmaster (the road by then was a good one as much trade passed through the village) and hired 30 strongarms. They returned with him to the vale and attacked the

walls of the tower with picks, bars, and hammers. In two days they breached the wall in one place, and were nearly through in another. Gathen took up his armor and weaponry from years ago and ventured within.

No one knows what fate befell Gathen, called the Swiftsword. He was not seen again. The workers did not follow him. Several who looked within as they enlarged the hole spoke later of "shifting shadows" and "odd, high calls, like a bird or bells, high and far-off."

Just as dusk fell upon the valley, that day when Gathen vanished, there came a great, rumbling roar of riven stone crashing to the ground, as the tower burst apart. Out of its falling stones rose a great dragon, its wings as broad as the tower had stood tall. It flew away northwards without pause, while the tower crumbled into rubble behind it. Some said the dragon was white, some said that it had scales of brassy hue, and others claim that its scales were green, or the hue of electrum. It did not come back.

In the morning many climbed the rocks to look upon the ruin of the tower, and they found it little more than a ring of tumbled rock. Of life, or furnishings, or treasure, nothing could be found.

One curious farmer swore he saw a silvery doorway floating high in the air above the ruins at sunset, just for a moment, but he was known to be half-witted and his story was not believed. A few others who looked later and saw such a thing were not believed either.

Some of the men from Mulmaster dug among the stones of the tower and found a shaft leading down into darkness. However, the shaft soon lead to water, and the men thought it to have been only Maskyr's well. Most of the men hired from Mulmaster fled soon after the fall of the tower, when they heard the sounds of digging beneath their feet as they poked around the rubble—digging sounds that grew steadily louder.

In the days that followed, dwarves were seen on the site where the tower had stood, And adventurers, particularly young mages who rode alone, began to come to the valley, seeking treasure. There was trouble with the local farmers, who grew tired of being threatened or enspelled to reveal where they had hidden the rich treasures that they *must* have gained from Maskyr's shattered abode.

The wizard Loathren of Phlan came to the vale and tried to build a tower of his own on the site. He perished when the scattered stones on the bluff rose into the air, whirled around like a cloud of leaves spun about in autumn winds, and fell crushingly upon his encampment. Some said it was Maskyr's work, or that of a curse or magic he had left behind. Others held that the dwarves beneath were to blame, or another wizard who did not wish Loathren to gain Maskyr's secrets and power.

The notion of a curse on the ruin of Maskyr's tower spread. Bards sang of it in their travels, and the flow of hopeful dweomercrafters and adventurers dwindled noticeably. Local farmers began to cart away stones; tall grass and shrubs soon overgrew the area.

There is little left of Maskyr's tower to look at today; many of its stones have found their way into stone cottages and walls around the vale. Locals come in haste to warn away travelers on the road. However, there are a few who are foolish enough to camp on the tower's site for a night or light a fire there. The work of vanished wizards is best left undisturbed, the locals say.

By night the rubble-strewn site still remains an eerie place. It affords a grand lookout over the valley and the road, and twice when rumors of orc hordes have risen strong in the area, riders from Mulmaster have come to the bluff to set up a watchpost. None have ever found any treasure—or, if they have, they have stolen it away unobserved and spoken not of it.

Local legends persist of Maskyr's treasure and great magic, which is thought to be hidden somewhere near where the tower stood. The legends also whisper that Maskyr will return one day and seek out any who have taken so much as a copper piece that was his.

Next time, we'll look at the present-day village of Maskyr's Eye. If you have a map of the Realms, find it on the road south of Mulmaster (we'll look at Mulmaster, too, soon enough). There it sits. There's nothing very special about it. And yet, after we've peeked at its history and its folk and their doings, it'll make a fine setting for characters just beginning their careers—and looking to find adventures in RAVENS BLUFF™, The Living City, Calaunt, and Mulmaster

Current Clack

To keep me up to date with happenings in the Realms, Elminster frequently

tells me about current news and rumors heard in taverns, inns, and marketplaces in the Dragon Reach lands. I'll relate one snippet of such "current clack" ("clack" is a Dalelands word meaning gossip or the major topics of the day's talk) for those running campaigns set in the Realms:

* In the harbor of Alaghon, in Turmish, the mage Orelvan Blackshammer, who lived in an ornate houseboat, is thought to have perished when it was destroyed.

The destruction was wrought by a hitherto unknown type of dragon, a large and terrible wyrm of cinnamon brown hue, with a long prehensile tail. The creature breathes forked lightning. The dragon's spells include some monster summoning magic—it spat living creatures around the harbor. Those that survived their landings attacked bystanders without hesitation. The dragon also could *reverse gravity.*

The dragon, evidently summoned or released by Orlevan, coiled its tail about his houseboat, lifted it into the air, and blasted it with spells and its breath until the boat was reduced to mere ashes drifting on the wind. Then the dragon beat its great batlike wings and flew northeast, out over The Sea of Fallen Stars, where it was lost to sight.

Sages and alchemists alike are very eager to examine this "Cinnamon Dragon" (or others of its kind) to determine its nature and what uses can be made of its body parts and abilities. ❑

Odder than Odd

A Call of Cthulhu game scenario for two or more discreet investigators

Illustration by Gary M. Williams

by Greg Alms

Background for the Keeper

John Hasz, a rookie from the Boston Police Department who recently transferred to South Beach, has noticed some unexplainable dealings between his police captain and the administrator at the local mental institute. First, an old man brought in on a drunk and disorderly charge was sent to the institute for overnight observation. Officer Hasz noticed the report stated that the unnamed man was released directly from the institute, which he knew wasn't standard procedure— prisoners of any kind are returned to the jail, then released. Hasz later found the drunk's possessions in the station's dumpster.

Second, a lady, Debbie White, brought in for questioning regarding nonpayment of rent, was discovered to be unsure of who she was, and where she was. Hasz was assigned to track down her next of kin, and the captain seemed oddly interested when it was discovered she had no living relatives. She, too, was sent to the institute. Hasz was told to end her report with "Sent to H.R.H. for observation." Officer Hasz found several other reports in the files ending the same way.

The police captain, Reilly, sends anyone he can to Dr. Grebber at the Harborview Rest Home to be sedated until meeting their final fate, sacrifice to Cthulhu. This scheme has run surprisingly well, unnoticed for several years.

South Beach is a small town of 200 located southeast of Edgartown on the island of Martha's Vineyard.

John Hasz contacted a friend at the Boston Police Department, who is sending an investigating team next week to check on Hasz's discoveries. They will go under the premise that a relative complained of a missing person to protect Hasz and prevent a possible coverup. However, Hasz's friend contacts a PC in the hope that he and his fellow investigators will go and find the truth before the presence of official police investigators frightens Reilly into halting whatever he is up to. Hasz's friend knows that if the official investigators find nothing the truth may be forever concealed.

The Investigation

If one of the PCs has a contact at the police department, the PC gets the following call one Tuesday evening:

> "There's something going on in South Beach, that's on Martha's Vineyard, that might be right up your alley. According to a friend of mine at the South Beach Police Department, his boss, Captain Reilly, could be involved in some missing persons cases. He's sending people to a place he refers to as "H.R.H." and nobody knows where they go after that. The BPD is sending some "undercover" investigators out there next week, but when they hit the island Reilly will go to ground and nobody will ever know the whole truth. My friend's name is Officer John Hasz. You can tell him I sent you, but if you tell anybody else I'll deny it. Gotta go now."

If the PCs have no friendly police contact they can get the call anonymously, through a private eye, or through a police officer they have met in their previous adventures (perhaps under less-than-friendly circumstances).

The PCs can get to the island by driving to Wood's Hole (about 65 miles from Boston) or taking a bus for 80 cents. From Wood's Hole they have to take the ferry to Vineyard Haven. The ferry takes 45 minutes each way and runs twice daily, 9 a.m. and 3 p.m.; a round trip costs a dollar.

Once settled on the island, the investigators can start their search at one of several sources. Information obtainable from these sources is listed under their headings. Should the investigators decide to visit an unlisted source, the Keeper can decide what, if any, information is found.

John Hasz: If contacted, Hasz will secretly meet with the investigators and divulge all he knows (see Background). He appreciates their presence and will try to covertly aid them if he can. (His position as a police officer keeps him from accompanying the PCs or helping them openly.) He has learned nothing new since he called Boston. He assumes that H.R.H. stands for Harborview Rest Home, but knows little about the place except that it is run by a Dr. Grebber. If asked, he tells the PCs that Reilly has been chief for about eight years.

Other police: Questioning the other officer in the South Beach Police Department, Lars Knudek, is likely to arouse suspicion, though a good story (fabricated lie) and a successful *Oratory* roll will convince him to answer a few questions. Officer Knudek is trying to raise eight kids and support a sick wife on his salary from the department and inconsistent wages from his morning job on his father's fishing boat. His least concern is the occasional loony that the department sends away for observation.

Getting information from police departments in other towns on the island will require a successful *Law* roll. In any case, they will report nothing out of the ordinary and may note that they occasionally send someone to the Harborview Rest Home, though they will not give out any names.

South Beach Library: If a character decides to check for old newspaper articles regarding the Harborview Rest Home, a successful *Library Use* roll produces an article covering an investigation of the home by the South Beach Police. The article is nine years old and the officers involved were B. Reilly and K. Ridgeway. The article states that "certain suspicious occurrences were investigated and found to be quirks of nature carelessly associated with the home," and goes on to say that an apology was given by the S.B.P.D. The investigators also find Ridgeway's obituary and a small article regarding his death after contracting food poisoning. The report and obituary are in the same day's newspaper.

With another successful *Library Use* roll the characters will find a few articles on weird occurrences such as occasional livestock massacres, strings of missing persons, and the like. The investigators may note (successful *Idea* roll) that the occurrences ended somewhat abruptly eight years ago. This is approximately the time Reilly became captain, this fact being easily found in several places including from Hasz.

Debbie White: If the PCs check on Ms. White they discover that she hasn't yet returned from the home. A successful *Oratory* roll will allow Mrs. McCratchity, White's landlady, to feel comfortable enough with the investigators to talk with them. "Funny thing," she'll say, "I kept callin' thems police folk and ther last time I called 'em they sez to me to jes pack up her stuff and rent the place out to some one new, funny thing that is. I jes wanted to know when she'd be all cured."

Captain Reilly: Investigators must be careful if they should wish to talk to the captain. He will not hesitate to arrest them and send them to Dr. Grebber for sedation and future sacrifice. Any investigator talking with Reilly will find him to be more sane than not, though peculiar in some unexplainable way. Any investigator making a *Spot Hidden* roll notices a ring on Reilly's finger odd enough to attract attention. The band is silver metal (silver, in fact) with a large green stone that looks incredibly plain and worthless. The ring ties Reilly to Cthulhu.

The keeper should have the players make any *Law* or *Fast Talk* rolls deemed necessary should they make the captain even slightly suspicious. A successful *Psychology* roll reveals that Reilly is hostile to the investigators, and is hiding something.

Captain Reilly

STR	14	**CON**	12
SIZ	15	**INT**	14
POW	14	**DEX**	13
APP	16	**EDU**	11
SAN	50	**HPS**	14

Skills: First Aid 45%, Cthulhu Mythos 20%, Occult 40%, Law 75%, Spot Hidden 30%, Listen 50%, Fast Talk 25%, Shotgun Attack 65%, Handgun Attack 60%.

Magic Item: *Cult Ring.* These items empower the wearer with the ability to cast a *Contact Deity* spell once a week at normal *POW* cost. This ring is attuned to Cthulhu. Characters with no *Cthulhu Mythos* knowledge (score of 0) immediately gain 5 points of knowledge and become indefinitely insane (from the sudden revelation) the first time they cast the spell. Such characters fall under the deity's sway and become NPCs under the DM's control until they can be cured. A cure is not possible until the ring is removed, and once insane the victim never willingly removes the ring or allows it to be removed. Characters with some knowledge cannot automatically gain knowledge or be driven immediately insane (their minds are not blank slates to be written on). However, any

character who goes insane for any reason while wearing the ring goes indefinitely insane and falls under the deity's sway, gaining five points of knowledge in the process (madmen have special insight into the mythos). In either case, the character can be cured normally once the ring is removed, and investigators return to player control once cured.

Dr. Grebber *Fast Talked* Reilly into donning the ring during the investigation (see South Beach Library section). Reilly, who thought he was being bribed, tried to play along and really get the goods on Grebber, but became insane instead.

Harborview Rest Home: The investigators' first shock here may come from the surprisingly small size of the home, especially for the number of patients sent here. The home can accommodate 10 patients and at present has eight. Needless to say, this facility cannot cure anyone's insanity.

A. Front Office: This will most likely be the first room the investigators come to if they visit the home by choice rather than force. Dominating the room is a large desk with a chair behind it. The desk belongs to Mable, the home's secretary, cook, maid, and nurse. She will not be present in the room, but ringing the small bell on her desk will call her.

Mable is an honest, hard working old lady. She is not at all suspicious of Dr. Grebber, who disposes of the patients at night when she is not working and then tells her they were healthy again and were able to go home.

B. Dr. Grebber's Office: A nicely decorated office with a large desk in the center, a long book case along the west wall, and a fireplace in the northern wall. A successful *Spot Hidden* roll reveals a couple of books pertaining to the occult on the book shelf. One book, titled *The Abysmally Absurd,* is filled with disgustingly strange poetry and will cost the reader 1d4 *SAN* points unless a sanity roll succeeds. In either case the reader gains one point of *Cthulhu Mythos* knowledge.

The investigators will find the doctor here during the day. He will appear distracted, and if the investigators ask about any of the patients he will assure them of their improving health. However, he won't allow them to see any patients.

Dr. Grebber wears a ring identical to Reilly's, which characters may notice with a *Spot Hidden* roll. If he becomes worried because of the investigators, he will contact Reilly for advice and assistance. He always keeps a syringe and fast-acting sedatives on his person for emergencies.

Dr. Grebber

STR	8	**CON**	14
SIZ	15	**INT**	16
POW	10	**DEX**	12
APP	7	**EDU**	14
SAN	35	**HPS**	15

Skills: Read English 80%, Read Latin 45%, Diagnose Disease 35%, First Aid 80%, Pharmacy 55%, Psycoanalysis 60%, Psychology 40%, Treat Disease 25%, Treat Poison 15%, Syringe Attack 55%, Cthulhu Mythos 30%, Occult 40%.
Magic Item: Grebber's ring is identical to the one Reilly wears, but Grebber was a Cultist before donning the ring and is permanently insane.

C. Secret Lab: The entrance to this room is hidden in Grebber's fireplace. It can be found by tapping on the brickwork in the fireplace or with a successful *Spot Hidden* roll.

The stench in this room is horrific. Seeing the odd, crude equipment strewn about the room and imagining what the doctor uses it for will cost all viewing investigators to make a successful *sanity* roll or lose one *SAN* point.

D. Kitchen: During the day, Mable is here if not already encountered in the front office.

E. Visitor's Room: This is where patients recieve visitors. Dr. Grebber is careful to keep patients with frequent visitors in good health.

F. Common Room: Patients healthy enough to move about spend their days here, mainly so Mable and the doctor can keep an eye on them.

G. Porch: A large rug covers a trap door which leads to the stairway to the cellar.

H-K. Patient's rooms: These stark rooms have a disinfectant smell. The only furnishings are beds and chests of drawers for the patients.

L. Cell: This padded cell is always kept locked and is currently empty. A straight jacket lies in one corner.

M. Bathroom: This is a nondescript room with the usual fixtures.

N. Dr. Grebber's Room: The only interesting thing in this room is in a box at the bottom of Dr. Grebber's wardrobe. The box holds a gray-green robe and a long, silver dagger. Any investigator who makes a successful *Cthulhu Mythos*

roll recognizes the robe as a Cthulhu worshipper's ceremonial robe. A careful look at the dagger reveals traces of dried blood.

0. Cellar: The cellar is dark and misty. There is a small supply of recently cut logs in the north alcove, an assortment of tools and a wheelbarrowhanging on hooks driven into the earthen wall opposite the stairs, and a collection of 45 bottles of fine wine in the south alcove.

P. Secret Cellar Room: Entrance to this room is via a 2-foot by 3-foot hole hidden by the hanging wheelbarrow. There is a potbelly stove in the southwestern corner. Debbie White is chained to the eastern wall. Investigators can tell she has been either neglected or abused since she arrived at the home and is in horrible shape. All viewing her must make a *sanity* roll or lose 1d4 *SAN*, a successful roll still results in the loss of one *SAN* point.

If the investigators fail to find Debbie White by Friday (they were notified on Tuesday), Dr. Grebber will retrieve her at about 11:30 Friday night. At about 11:50, Captain Reilly will arrive in a small horse-drawn cart, and the two will load the body into the cart and cover it with a blanket. If the investigators are watching, they see Dr. Grebber enter the house and reemerge a short while later carrying a box. (Unless they found the box in his wardrobe previously and removed it).

The two depart and head off into the woods behind the home. They go to a small clearing already filled with 11 others wearing ceremonial robes. If not interrupted, the doctor and captain proceed with the ceremony, placing the drugged and comatose body of Debbie White in the center of the clearing. The ceremony goes on for about two hours and then a Deep One appears and takes Debbie White off into the darkness.

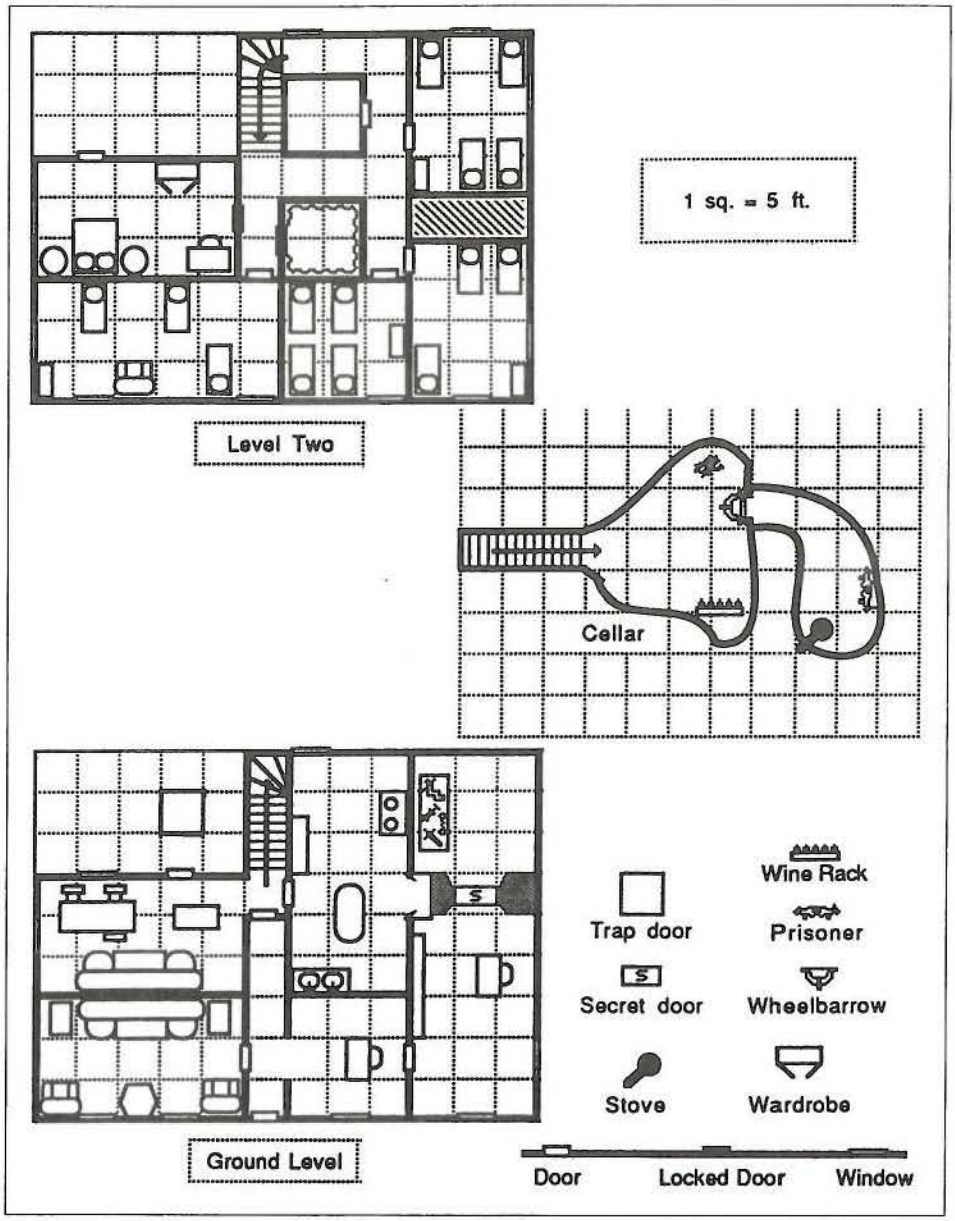
Deep One

STR	14	**CON**	11
SIZ	17	**INT**	13
POW	10	**DEX**	10
HPS	14	**Move**	8/10 swimming

Weapon	Attack %	Damage
Claw	25%	1d6+1d4
Trident	25%	1d6+1+1d4*

***The trident can impale and can be thrown.**

Armor: 1 point of scales and skin.



SAN: Investigators who see the Deep One lose 1d6 *SAN* unless a *sanity* roll is made.

If the ceremonial party is attacked, all will flee into the woods except Dr. Grebber and Captain Reilly. Dr. Grebber will try to either guard the sacrifice or carry her off into the woods. Reilly will retrieve his shotgun from the cart and fight back unless the odds are overwhelming. If so, he also flees into the woods.

Benefits: Discovering what Dr. Grebber and Captain Reilly really are up to and ridding the world of either of them will allow the investigators to regain two *SAN* points each, or six each if both are dealt with. (Removing Reilly's ring and setting him on the road to recovery counts as getting rid of him.) The keeper should decide what reward the investigators receive from South Beach or Debbie White as best suits the campaign. ❑

GEnie in a Computer

The Network Goes On Line

by Scott Barr

There is a Network club you might not be aware of. Anyone in the United States, Canada, Japan, Germany, Austria, or Switzerland can join. Gamers from the United Kingdom soon will be eligible for membership. The club does not, as you might suspect, cover such large areas using transporter beams or some great mage's spell. No, we're using an ingenious device that functions kind of like a *crystal ball* and kind of like a *tongues* spell. It's called a *modem.*

In less esoteric terms, what this means is that the RPGA™ Network is now available to members of the GEnie information service. Personal computers across the globe can access the GEnie system and the RPGA Network. In fact, TSR, Inc. sponsors a GEnie system forum that the RPGA Network calls home.

To get involved, all you have to do is become a GEnie subscriber. To accomplish this, use your 300/1200 baud modem and favorite telecommunications software and dial 800-636-8369. If you would like more information before joining, call (voice) 800-638-9636. (If you have no idea what modems and telecommunications software are, pay a visit to your local library or computer dealer.)

The club sponsors real-time games, held in a conference room format much like traditional RPGA Network tournaments. In addition we sponsor message-based games, which resemble play-by-mail or bulletin board games held on various computer systems in many cities.

We are constantly looking for new game masters and new players. As mentioned above, there is a complete TSR, Inc. product support roundtable chock full of information on new products, computer games, conventions, the Mail Order Hobby Shop, and many other items.

Don't hesitate—dial in and enjoy one of our adventures, read the messages, download a computer program or text file, and meet TSR Inc.'s authors and editors; join the first electronic RPGA Network club.

A Haunting Contest

Everyone Has a Ghost of a Chance

Network HQ wants to build a haunted house, but we need your help to do it. In this issue's contest we ask you to create rooms for the house; one "room" constitutes one entry. You can enter as many times as you like. (In other words, send us as many rooms as you can dream up.)

We'll take the best entries and build a house with them. The house will be used in a Network tournament or will be published in the POLYHEDRON™ Newszine (or maybe both). Wait a minute! This is such a good idea, we'll build two houses—one for the AD&D® 2nd edition game, and the other for Chaosium's Call of Cthulhu game.

The Rules

Each entry must be typed, double spaced. Computer printouts are acceptable if they can be read easily. Put your name and membership number in the upper right hand corner of the first page. And your name in the upper right hand corner of every other page. Print or type on one side of the page only.

Each entry should not exceed four typed pages. Each entry should state the size of the "room" and describe the contents and occupants. The descriptions of the occupants should include complete game statistics in the same format used in the Newszine. See *Odder than Odd* in this issue for the Call of Cthulhu format, and *Caves of Confection,* issue #51, for the AD&D 2nd edition game format.

All entries will be treated as submissions to the Newszine.

The Categories

Room. Pick a main room in a house, and tell us what the room is or how it is used, i.e. bedroom, kitchen, study, pantry, etc.

Hallway. A room used for going between other rooms.

Closet. Any space, except an attic or basement used strictly for storage. Make sure you note whether this is a closet found in a hallway, bedroom, etc.

Attics/Basements: This category covers multi-purpose areas found under or over main living area. Dormers and garrets also fall into this category.

Etc.: This category covers everything else, such as stairways, dumb waiters, chimneys, tool sheds, cisterns, etc.

The Prizes

We will award first and second place prizes in the AD&D game and the Call of Cthulhu categories, 16 prizes in all. Each winner will receive a computer role playing game from SSI. **Mark on your entry one of the following computers:** Commodore 64/128, Atari ST, Amiga, Apple II, or IBM. If you don't have one of those computer systems, mark one anyway, and if you win you can give the game away to a friend. Sorry, you can't specify the name of the computer game you want.

The Deadline

All entries must be postmarked by October 1st, 1990.

The Living Galaxy

The Lights Are On, But No One's Home: Part 1

by Roger E. Moore

Random encounters ("wandering monsters") are a popular feature of any fantasy role-playing game; goblins, trolls, giants, and dragons lurk around every bend in the road. Science-fiction role-playing games have random encounters, too. But instead of dragons, the intrepid player characters meet every conceivable sort of spacecraft, from merchant to warship to pirate. Many games have die-roll tables for determining the types of ships met, but most such encounter tables refer only to *manned* spacecraft. Where do unmanned spacecraft fit into the scheme of things?

You could argue that unmanned satellites are "boring" in science fiction campaigns. How much excitement is there in an encounter with a weather satellite? The answer depends on your imagination. The next two installments of *The Living Galaxy* take a look at unmanned spacecraft, the all-critical (though all-but-forgotten) workhorses of the future. Placing these encounters in any science fiction campaign is easy to do.

Where Are They, And Why?

It isn't difficult to figure out why you would expect to find millions of unmanned satellites scattered all over the inhabited galaxy—and why your ongoing campaign probably has ignored them until now. Unmanned robotic spacecraft are cheaper to build than manned spacecraft; you can pack an enormous amount of equipment into a satellite if you don't have to worry about life support for any crewmen aboard it. Unmanned spacecraft also can be placed in areas where humans would rarely go—deep in radiation belts, near the surfaces of stars, and on lifeless moons, for example. And robotic satellites can perform very repetitious and boring functions long after the crews in manned ships would have mutinied, gone mad, or died of old age.

So why haven't your PCs met any such satellites? Well, they probably have. The ship's pilot or astrogator has probably noted uncounted thousands of them on his radar over the years, and the communications officer has probably listened to radio telemetry chatter from many more unseen ones. Merchants may have shipped untold numbers of satellite components or ready-to-use satellites from world to world. Mercenaries may have used unmanned communications, navigation, and surveillance satellites on their missions. Gunners may have fired on (and been fired on by) robot warships. Unmanned spacecraft are everywhere, but few people pay particular attention to them most of the time.

It is logical to assume that by the time we can travel to and settle other worlds, we will have turned the making of unmanned spacecraft into a fine art. Huge interstellar and planetary corporations will manufacture millions of satellites for sale to world governments, science foundations, military forces, and private concerns across the galaxy. If it is easy for the PCs to get from world to world, then dropping satellites into orbit should be even easier. Manned ships could get contracts to place satellites in orbit around worlds as the ships leave for other parts of the universe. Some planetary governments would own "space truck" fleets of manned or unmanned ships to routinely carry unmanned payloads into space.

In any solar system, most unmanned craft are found in orbit around inhabited worlds and near deep-space colonies, where they best serve the needs of the populace. A few might be scattered across uninhabited parts of the system, either in solar orbit, planetary orbit, or on planetary surfaces. Where you find unmanned satellites depends largely on their specific purposes. An exploration satellite with a robotic land vehicle should be found on or around a planet—unless it missed its target and now drifts in an endless solar orbit.

The function of a satellite determines what sort of orbit the satellite has around an inhabited world. Military photoreconnaissance satellites are often found in low orbit, where they can get clear pictures of ground targets. Many communications satellites are placed in very high geosynchronous orbits, so that the satellites remain over specific locations on the world's equator, to broadcast or relay messages over whole hemispheres. Certain reconnaissance and weather satellites have high-inclination polar orbits, crossing directly over the poles so they have a complete view of every part of the world's surface. (A world whose colonies are located at its poles would have many polar-orbiting spacecraft for communications and other purposes.) And today's world tends to boost dying satellites into very high orbits to get them out of the way of other space traffic, particularly if those satellites have nuclear reactors aboard.

Anatomy of a Satellite

A brief look at the makeup of an unmanned satellite is in order. When you design a robotic spacecraft for a science fiction adventure, it helps to look through several books showing illustrations or photographs of modern spacecraft. You might create a few basic satellite models built and used in your campaign, noting the features on each that would attract attention. A sketch of each type would also help, using a 6'-tall human for reference (or even a small spacecraft—like the PCs' ship—for larger vessels). Take the time to locate the following systems and parts on each satellite you create:

Sensors: Sensors are devices that detect electromagnetic radiation, such as visible light, ultraviolet and infrared light, cosmic rays, radio waves, radar, magnetic fields, and so forth. Multispectral scanners take in data from several types of sensors at the same time to give a detailed view of the spacecraft's surroundings. Cameras and antennas of every sort gather the data, which is recorded in the computer or transmitted to a distant receiver. Not all sensors detect radiation. For example, tactile sensors that measure current, temperature, and vibration can tell if the craft is in physical contact with another body.

Propulsion system: Propulsion devices move spacecraft into new orbits and locations. Some spacecraft have no propulsion systems, others have minor course-correction thrusters, and some have interplanetary or (rarely) interstellar drives.

Navigation system: Is the spacecraft pointing in the right direction? Internal

and external sensors, tied in with navigational programs in the computer and with the propulsion system, keep the craft on course. Gyroscopes, gravity stabilizer booms, spinning, or thrusters keep the craft oriented so it can accomplish its mission.

Computer: Though many satellites are controlled by humans in ground or space stations, some have artificial intelligence (AI) systems, giving them the ability to devise their own plans within the limits of their programming (especially on deep-space or secret missions). At best, AI computers have both independence and flexibility, with a touch of creativity. At worst, they make the same silly errors than any human can make. Obviously, a remote-control satellite is only as smart as its operator; an AI satellite is only as smart as its programmer. Data gathered from sensors and communications systems is recorded in the computer's memory.

Power supply: Satellite power can be supplied by internal batteries or reactors, or by the gathering of solar or broadcast (e.g., microwave) power in large panels or sails. Internal power supplies can be armored to prevent loss from attack, radiation, micrometeorites, and other hazards. Solar sails are vulnerable to micrometeorite damage, but well-made versions provide endless sources of energy. Onboard fuel supplies are required for some power plants, but once the fuel runs out, the satellite dies or drifts until refueled. Nuclear reactors provide long-lived power supplies, though they have their own special hazards. Chemical cells are cheapest of all, but they don't last long and must be frequently replaced.

Body: The body of a spacecraft holds its various parts together as a whole. The framework, which gives the body rigidity, is either open (without armor or covering) or enclosed (for protection against wartime attacks or natural radiation, light, temperature changes, micrometeorites, etc.). An open-body spacecraft can, however, have armored parts. Some spacecraft have nonrigid bodies, either having their parts tethered together by cables (often spun to keep the parts separated by centrifugal force) or simply being gas-inflated balloons.

Communicators: Communication devices—consisting of antennas, receivers, transmitters, decoders, etc.—enable the spacecraft to transmit data and to take orders from ground stations and other spacecraft.

Miscellaneous: In addition to its most basic parts, an unmanned spacecraft can have cargo bays, weapons and security systems, scientific payload bays, secondary satellites, manipulative robotic arms, and almost anything else you can think of placing aboard them. Life-support systems are included only on rescue satellites, certain scientific (medical/biological) and passenger satellites, and craft requiring prolonged systems checks from inside. Features such as air locks, command bridges, food and water, living quarters, etc. must then be provided.

What They Do (A-K)

If you read through a number of books on the history of spaceflight, you will find that most satellites fall into one of several broad categories, depending on the missions they perform. You probably will have heard of weather, communications, and exploration satellites, but other satellite types may have escaped your notice, such as ferrets, freighters, and hunter/killers. In the years to come will be artsats, trashsats, tugsats, hijackers, decoys, sleepers — and more.

The following are some of the many sorts of unmanned spacecraft that you can drop into your campaign. Each type has nicknames (some of which are used by real-world space agencies) and mission profiles. Remember that a satellite may have several functions; for example, advertising and communications, weather and natural resources monitoring, or rescue and space-tug functions can be combined.

Note: An asterisk (*) indicates that a particular type of satellite is described in more detail in either this or the next issue of POLYHEDRON™ Newszine.

Adsat: A satellite meant purely or primarily for advertising purposes. An adsat must be reflective or well lit to be clearly seen from the ground. It might have a unique shape, like a symbol or logo, that would make it clearly visible to ground observers; this shape could be created using wires, foil, or frameworks, so the satellite might have much less mass than would be expected. (However, depending on the adsat's orientation when it is viewed by an observer, it could be seen as being upside down!) An adsat would probably also have a transmitter to send advertising messages to ground and space receivers. It takes little imagination to believe that people subjected to an adsat (especially a repetitious one) would grow very tired of it before long, even if the adsat's message changed frequently among several renters. Missions to disable adsats might become almost as common as missions to deploy them, with the PCs being hired by environmental purists as well as business competitors to shut adsats down.

Artsat: A satellite designed solely for art's sake? Given the resources of the future, this is not unlikely. An artsat could be a memorial statue carved from an orbiting meteoroid, or it could be a huge collection of reflective balloons, lights, and streamers that could be seen clearly from the ground all over the world. It might seem likely that only heavily populated worlds would have artsats, as they would have more people to appreciate them. However, artsats must have bright lights or be highly reflective in order to be clearly visible, and this would interfere with all sorts of ground-based astronomical programs—a major point in their scarcity. Maybe low-population worlds (like artists' colonies) would be better places for them. Disliked artsats could face the same problems as adsats*.

Autofac: Space is the perfect environment for many industrial processes, such as the making of tools and space parts, the growing of crystals, and the mining of ore-rich asteroids and meteoroids. Whole factories would find their places in orbit around settled worlds, and many of those factories easily could be automated (hence "autofac"). Autofacs are usually large, and they have every imaginable mission, from mining raw materials to producing final manufactured goods and transporting them to their markets. Exceptionally large autofacs might have their own small fleets of spacecraft for mining, hauling, and repair work. Some autofacs can duplicate themselves, given enough materials and energy, creating belts of mining and manufacturing plants around industrialized worlds.

Autofacs are usually civilian, but both civilian and military versions are likely to have security systems, possibly including the presence of military carriers* and their fleets of hawks*. Manned visits to autofacs to check up on things are common, though some might be inspected only by small, unmanned satellites like tugsats*.

Bombsat: A bombsat is a generic term for any space vehicle made to explode and destroy either itself, a ground target, or a targeted space vehicle. It can be anything from an orbital ICBM, a miniature space mine with a

radar proximity fuse, a space-to-space guided missile, or a fakesat* made to resemble a normal courier* (but which carries a warhead to destroy the space station toward which it is heading). Hawks* are sometimes bombsats made to locate and destroy specific targets. Sleeper* bombsats are also possible, awakening once they detect suitable targets.

Bombsats may be sneaky and cheap, but they have a severe disadvantage in that they create enormous amounts of hazardous debris that are difficult (if not impossible) to get rid of. Sufficient numbers of bombsats detonated in orbit around a world will create dangers for any spacecraft in that area for centuries; this "orbital sabotage" tactic is disliked by all but the most fanatic governments. Nonetheless, bombs are often placed aboard military spysats and couriers as self-destruct devices to prevent their capture by enemy forces. These self-destruct devices are usually shaped-charge conventional bombs.

Some bombsats contain enormous nuclear warheads made to interrupt or destroy electromagnetic communication over wide areas of a world's surface. The electromagnetic pulse (EMP) from a large nuclear device can "decapitate" command structures and send a nation into chaos by destroying uncountable numbers of electronic systems lacking sufficient shielding, such as: land-, sea-, and aircraft guidance computers; TV and radio transmitters; microwave-relay telephone and telemetry transmissions; ground-and space-based power stations; library computer archives; robots; privately-owned computer systems; and automated factories.

Interestingly, the possession of an EMP bombsat system is viewed as both more and less threatening than the possession of a standard ICBM system. A nation could be paralyzed by a first-strike EMP attack and thus lose a war almost by default and with relatively few casualties for the attackers — which starts to make a nuclear war look rather attractive, if you accept the fact that the material damage to the losing side will be uncountable. One can envision worlds enslaved or held for ransom by bombsat systems placed around them by other interstellar powers.

NEO-burst (near-Earth-orbit) nuclear weapons are also capable of damaging nearby spacecraft by forming new or strengthening natural radiation belts (early H-bomb-in-space tests in the 1960s proved this). Most manned spacecraft would already have considerable shielding from cosmic and solar radiation, but certain systems aboard such craft might be vulnerable.

As one would expect, nearly all nuclear bombsats of any type are fakesats*; few nations would openly admit to having weapons such as these. However, as noted earlier, not all bombsats are nuclear or of gross size. A low-yield nuclear warhead (under 1 kiloton) or a powerful shaped-charge conventional warhead might fit the bill, depending on the bombsat's purpose; no sense in killing a mosquito with a shotgun.

One type of nuclear bombsat that would have a use approved by almost any government is that designed to destroy large meteoroids and asteroids that are on collision courses with inhabited worlds or space colonies. The bombed asteroid is meant to either be deflected away or shattered into bits small enough to be destroyed by friction when entering the atmosphere—or at least small enough to cause less damage than a strike by an intact asteroid.

Buoys: Space buoys are satellites that transmit warnings and navigational information to space pilots and astrogators. Some are parasites, meaning that they are attached to another body in space, nearly always large junkers* or chunks of debris that cannot safely be cleared away (a battle-damaged and lifeless warship that is filled with booby traps and nuclear material is a good example). Others drift in orbital bands filled with debris that has not been removed by trashsats* and still presents a danger to travel. Some circle in groups around unstable suns or hazardous planets, warning incoming ships of the particular dangers of the locale (radiation belts, solar flares, atmospheric poisons or viruses, cultural xenophobia, etc.).

Other buoys simply broadcast information on the worlds they encircle, giving such useful and basic information as atmospheric type, population size, government policies, approved transmission frequencies, and so on. These buoys essentially welcome newcomers to the system and get the ships oriented as quickly as possible before landing.

Information given out by any buoy is updated as often as possible. A buoy may transmit on several frequencies either to make sure its message is heard or to give out several different types of messages at the same time, one on each channel. It is very likely that the frequencies used by buoys would be standardized by interstellar law so that every pilot, communications officer, and astrogator would know how to receive this information. Finding a star system's buoys might be one of the first objectives a ship's crew faces each time it enters a system.

Carrier: A carrier is a large vehicle that houses a number of smaller spacecraft that it can launch for particular missions. Unlike a lifter*, a carrier is made to recover all the spacecraft it launches, so that it can carry them to another location to accomplish another mission. Nearly all carriers are military in nature, carrying hawks* or other milsats* into combat. A few carriers are science sats*, hauling fleets of science scouts* into unexplored systems. A military carrier can be very heavily armed and armored as it is so expensive to make, and it is likely to be defended by the hawks it carries as well as by other milsats in its battle group.

Comsat: Communications satellites are among the most important unmanned satellites of all. Their value is so great as to be difficult to measure, since they have so many uses. Commercial communications networks and military forces are among the greatest users of comsats (military comsats are often called milcomsats).

Most comsats relay radio and television signals sent up from one ground station to other ground stations on the side of the world facing that satellite. Few comsats broadcast prerecorded messages unless they are adsats*, buoys*, or propsats*. Anyone with the right equipment can pick up a comsat's broadcasts. Specialized comsats include those for amateur shortwave radio, coded and hard-to-jam military signals, educational programming, advertising, and political broadcasts. Milcomsats, vital in wartime, are usually armored against EMP bursts or shrapnel from bombsats*, weapons fire from hawks*, and sabotage. Redundant milcomsat networks are the norm, and many could be sleepers*.

Courier: Unlike a freighter*, a courier handles low-bulk cargoes across a variety of courses. A group of giant space stations orbiting a world could have routine courier service among them, sending tools, supplies, medicines, and the like as needed. Normal mail would be sent electronically, but certain secret documents might be sent through a courier to prevent their interception by ELINT spysats*. Couriers

are generally small, not much larger than their own cargo holds and engines. Privately owned couriers are sometimes called pick-ups or vans.

Fakesat: A fakesat—also called a Q-sat (for Q-ship), double, doppleganger, dop, or mole—is a satellite made to look and perform like any relatively harmless sort, but which actually has a completely different and usually hostile mission. For example, a fake metsat* is orbited and goes about its usual weather-watching mission, but one day one of its main cameras stops working. The satellite has several other equally powerful cameras, so it's not a major problem. But ground control does not know that the "broken" camera is now photographing military ground targets independently of the other cameras, and a special transmitter on the satellite is broadcasting the information acquired to an enemy spysat* in high orbit about the world in question. The metsat was doctored by a rival world government in the same system. Thanks to the metsat's redundant camera system, it is unlikely that a repair team will come up to fix the problem; if one does, the metsat is rigged to have a fuel-tank explosion as soon as someone starts to tamper with it.

Fakesats are usually military in nature, though large corporations have adequate reasons to use them. A fakesat is usually either a hawk*, spysat, or comsat*, but it could be any other military satellite in need of a disguise. A fakesat could also appear to be a normal satellite that has "gone dead" from normal or accidental wear and tear, yet continues to function in some degree—a sleeper*.

Three important types of military fakesats should be mentioned: the decoy, the wolf, and the pigeon. A decoy is a fakesat that either looks or acts (or both) like a type of satellite that is sure to draw attention. The decoy's purpose is to lure other ships (manned or unmanned) into closing with it or following it, thus either drawing its prey into a trap or ambush, leading its prey away from a more important subject, or else splitting an enemy force to weaken it for subsequent attack. Some decoys are very small but give off radio emissions and radar signatures like those of much larger craft. For example, a decoy of an unarmed freighter* might be used by a police force to draw pirates into an ambush.

A wolf is meant to have the opposite psychological effect; the wolf is made to imitate a very threatening craft (or even a fleet of ships) in hopes of frightening off those who detect it. A wolf that imitates a battle cruiser will probably scare small ships full of adventurers away from a quarantined planet or restricted military area that is generally well known.

A pigeon (named for the clay pigeon) is a target vehicle built specifically to test the firing abilities of hawks* and manned warships. A pigeon has decoy characteristics but is very cheaply built in every respect. Some pigeons have been known to "fly the coop" (escape from a target-practice area), and these might wander around a system in solar orbit, confusing interstellar traffic until captured or destroyed.

Freighter: Automated freighters (usually quite large in size) can carry enormous quantities of supplies to manned and unmanned space stations in orbit. Freighters carrying liquid cargo are often called tankers, but many freighters carry both solid and liquid supplies. Military freighters sometimes have light armor and armament. The best freighters are reusable, so versions crossing through an atmosphere are streamlined. Freighters can automatically dock with their stations using cameras, radar homing devices, and the like. Any freighters in war zones must be protected by hawks*.

It is worth mentioning the USSR's series of Progress spacecraft, used with the *Salyut 6, Salyut 7,* and *Mir* space stations. An unmanned Progress freighter/tanker can carry 5,000 lbs. of goods, including food, medicines, clothing, fuel, water, spare parts, science experiments, and personal items like mail. It can also serve as a tugsat* by boosting a space station into a higher orbit once the Progress's supplies have been offloaded. Then, filled with trash by cosmonauts—two of whom can create a ton of garbage each month—the Progress vehicle is deorbited and destroyed.

Hawk: Hawks have a wide range of nicknames, including hunter/killers, H&Ks, assassins, interceptors, SAINTs (for satellite interceptors), and ASATs (for antisatellites). Hawks are armed military satellites designed to track down specific space-based targets and destroy them. Hawks might be bombsats*, designed to explode and spread shrapnel into the paths of targets, or they might be gunsats, armed with particle beams, self-propelled missiles, lasers, or other long-range attack systems (a hawk is usually assumed to be a gunsat). Hawks have a wide range of users, from police and military forces to criminal gangs to corporate and private security teams. Hawks are used extensively in interstellar warfare to cut away the space defenses of a target world or space colony prior to direct invasion or bombardment. Being robotic, hawks usually have greater fuel capacity and better maneuverability than manned fighters; they are also (like any other robotic ship) cheap and easy to make compared to manned ships. Worlds under special quarantine because of warfare, xenophobia, or disease might be guarded by hawks dropped off by an interstellar government to enforce the quarantine.

Hijacker: Basically a criminal or military tugsat*, this version is slightly more elaborate and often custom-built for certain types of satellite-hijacking missions. Repair capabilities are often stripped down or missing, and the hijacker (sometimes called a spider or wasp) may have equipment allowing it to override radio communications to and from the satellite that it is stealing. The tugsat's repair systems, if any, might also be designed to destroy propulsion systems on the hijacked satellite; the hijacker might also have industrial lasers to perform the same task. Once the hijacker has located its target satellite and captured it, it hauls its victim back to a predetermined location. A smaller version of the hijacker is the pickpocket, designed to remove parts from another spacecraft (legally or not).

Hijackers are legally operated by those in the repossession business ("repo men") and in the military, which may wish to "kidnap" satellites that are behaving in unusual ways, to see if they are really enemy milsats*. Private salvage companies use hijackers to capture disputed or unclaimed junkers* (often illegally). Because their missions tend to be more dangerous than those involving regular tugsats, hijackers are often armed and armored, and some travel with one or more hawks* as escorts.

Hitchhiker: A hitchhiker is a very specialized satellite. Usually made in an extremely small size, like a microsat (see "Minisat"), the hitchhiker is designed to follow and attach itself to a very large spacecraft or object. From that point, it can either serve as a buoy* to aid in locating the object at a later time, a spysat* that keeps tab on

Continued on page 31

The Living City

Lyle's Fine Cloaks

by Fran Hart

Lyle's Fine Cloaks is a large, brightly lit establishment filled with comfortably padded chairs, large mirrors, plush carpets, and many cloaks.

Five large racks of ready-made cloaks dominate the shop front. A few very elaborate cloaks are hung separately on the walls, displayed so people walking by the front window can see them.

One rack contains cloaks made of costly velvets trimmed with expensive furs and brocade collars. Many have detachable hoods, held on with silver or gold buttons.

The second rack has cloaks made of brocades and intricate tapestry patterns. A riot of colors can be found on the rack. Several of the garments have rich-looking, golden cloth accents. One particularly fine cloak, which Lyle does not expect to have on the rack long, is black, dotted with silver stars and trimmed with a silver border.

The third rack is filled with cloaks made from lighter fabrics. Gleaming satins and gossamer silks dominate; the colors seem more beautiful and richer than ordinary dyes could create.

The fourth rack is filled with cloaks made of dyed wool. The colors are more somber than those on the other racks, but the wool is of the finest grade, so soft and yet so thickly woven that it repels water. All are lined, and many have cleverly sewn pockets that seem to blend into the garment, becoming invisible.

The last rack holds plain traveling cloaks which are made from lambswool, wolf hide, and broadcloth. All have hoods, some of which are detachable.

The workmanship is of high quality. All have reinforced seams, invisible hem stitching, and double oversewing on the pockets.

The shop opened 57 years ago in what was one of Ravens Bluff's wealthier districts. Now, the area is largely upper middle class. Through the years, Lyle has made the name, "Lyle's Fine Cloaks," known throughout this section of the Realms.

Lyle the Elder is a cloakmaster, one of the few living cloak makers who can claim that title. He makes cloaks that are renowned for being the finest, the softest, the warmest, the lightest, and the most beautiful that can be had.

Lyle takes pride in his workmanship and in the reputation of his shop. He is also proud of his son, Lyle the Younger, an apprentice cloak maker.

Kings and queens, nobles and knights, generals and warlords have worn cloaks fashioned by Lyle. Some of the cloaks are so prized they are willed down to younger generations.

Indeed, many of Ravens Bluff's grandest residents wear cloaks from Lyle's Fine Cloaks. Among his most noted customers are Lady Katherine Marie Moorland, the Lords Thomas Raphiel and Charles Frederik LaVerne Blacktree IV, and Lord Mayor Charles Oliver O'Kane.

Lyle also sells adornments for his cloaks. A small wooden and glass case at the front of the shop contains a variety of brooches and cloak pins. Some are set with precious gems, while some are made from a variety of metals and feature designs of thistles or dragons. Some are plain circlets or look like swords and other weapons.

Prices for Lyle's cloaks vary, depending on the materials used. There is no cloak in the shop available for less than 10 gold pieces, and a few of the most expensive cloaks sell for a few hundred gold pieces.

Lyle also custom designs cloaks. There is usually a two-week waiting list for these garments. Lyle the Elder contracts out customized embroidery and some of the plain sewing to several expert needlewomen in the city. He expects high quality work and pays top wages.

Lyle is always interested in purchas-

ing unusual and high quality fabrics, materials, and furs. Sometimes he will trade cloaks for these materials, and occasionally he hires adventurers to acquire unusual fabrics.

Lyle's workroom is in the back of his shop. A door off the main room leads to a cluttered workroom where cutting tables and work tables vie for space amidst a jumble of patterns, shears, forms, sewing boxes, spools of thread, and pincushions filled with silver pins and needles. Large bins hold bolts of the finest fabrics in a vast variety of colors. An open wardrobe is filled with exotic furs and premium pelts. A cabinet overflows with laces and trims shot through with spun gold. Large ceramic bowls resting on one table hold assortments of small pearls, jet beads, and brightly shimmering spangles. Bright work lamps made of fine porcelain light the scene.

Two cots and a large wooden box filled with well worn, plain cloaks rest in one corner. The cloakmaster and his son do not live in the shop, but occasionally they rest here.

Lyle the Elder contracts with a private security firm to patrol the premises at night; he is not comfortable relying solely on the routine patrol provided by the city watch.

Lyle the Elder

0 Level Male Half Elf

STR: 9
INT: 15
WIS: 14
DEX: 17
CON: 15
CHA: 11
AC Normal: 7
AC Rear: 10
Hit Points: 6
Alignment: Neutral Good
Weapon Proficiency: Dagger
Nonweapon Proficiencies: Sewing (19), Weaving (19), Business Sense (14)
Languages: Common, Elvish

Lyle the Elder is 82 years old, stands 5'7" tall, has gray hair, dancing green eyes, and weighs 168 pounds. He wears plain clothes which are conspicuous because of their quality and workmanship. He habitually wears around his neck a knotted cord, which he uses for taking measurements, and silver pins and needles always can be seen stuck in his striped vest. His hands are quick and dextrous, and he is skilled at showing his goods to prospective buyers.

Lyle the Elder is a shrewd businessman. He is adept at sizing up his customers and estimating how much they can afford to spend. He is a driven worker and sells only perfect cloaks, therefore he never feels that he is cheating his customers. To Lyle, offering anything less than perfection would be an abomination to his soul and a blot on his reputation.

A respected craftsman, he is proud of his business and the tradition he will pass on to Lyle the Younger. The guild respects him for his abilities and the numerous satisfied customers he has in Ravens Bluff.

Years ago, Lyle came to Ravens Bluff to start his business. He had 1,500 gold pieces in his satchel and the cloak he made to satisfy the requirements to become a cloakmaster. The cloak was extraordinary, made of a light blue velvet and ornamented with clasps of silver.

He had apprenticed to elven cloak makers to learn his trade, being raised by his uncle, Crys Weatherwise, an elven mage. Crys had cast the spells *deeppockets, protection from evil,* and *permanency* on the blue cloak and provided Lyle with a number of scrolls that could be used to make normal garments into magic items. Lyle has been very discreet with the use of the scrolls, utilizing them to make fantastic cloaks which he gives to individuals in high places. These gifts have benefited his business.

Many years ago Lyle the Elder entered into a contract marriage with another half elf. She bore him a son, stayed until the contract was honored, then left one day, saying "I'm happy to get the threads off my clothes and out of my ears."

His shop and son are the most important things in Lyle's life. He has been strict, but fair, in the upbringing of Lyle the Younger. Every night he gives thanks that his son is interested in the business and is a talented cloak maker in his own right. He joyfully anticipates the day when Lyle the Younger becomes a cloakmaster. On that day, he will give his son half ownership in the business and welcome him as a partner.

Although Lyle is generally outgoing, he keeps one part of his life a secret. He often accepts old and worn cloaks as trade-ins on new ones. He says it is because he hates to see good cloth go to waste. These cloaks are piled in a box in the workroom where Lyle the Elder often works late into the night. He turns and trims and cuts down these garments into child-sized cloaks. He then bundles them up and on dark nights drops them at the homes of the poorer and ill-dressed children of the city. Many a child in Ravens Bluff has had cause to be grateful to an unknown benefactor for a cloak to keep out the cold.

Lyle the Younger

0 Level Male Half Elf

STR: 12
INT: 13
WIS: 12
DEX: 18
CON: 15
CHA: 16
AC Normal: 6
AC Rear: 10
Hit Points: 7
Alignment: Neutral Good
Weapon Proficiency: Dagger
Nonweapon Proficiencies: Sewing (18), Weaving (12), Sailing (18), Singing (16)
Languages: Common, Elvish

Lyle the Younger is a very attractive 34-year-old. He is well-built, with curly blond hair and glittering green eyes. He stands 5'8" tall and weighs 156 pounds. He enjoys life, and this shows in his twinkling eyes and smiling countenance. People enjoy having him around, and his existence has been a blessing to his father.

His father made sure that Lyle the Younger had a chance to enjoy his childhood by providing time for school, play, and other interests.

Lyle the Younger is well known to the tavern keepers and cafe owners around the city. He drinks little, but enjoys the singing and conversation found in these places. He has a pleasant singing voice and knows many songs. He also enjoys sailing and fishing, and his father encourages him to get out in the fresh air and spend time with his friends.

Lyle the Elder always offered his son security, love, and acceptance. In turn, he deeply respects his father, sincerely enjoys cloak making, and hopes to follow in his father's footsteps. There is a very sober and responsible side to Lyle the Younger; he understands every aspect of the business and finds it fascinating.

He desires to prove to his father that he is worthy of the title cloakmaster.

Lyle's Fine Cloaks

Others might have been discouraged when their efforts at cloak making did not quite reach the high standard needed for an item to be judged as worthy for a master cloak, but not Lyle the Younger. He cheerfully began again to select materials, carefully cut the pattern, and stitch a master's cloak.

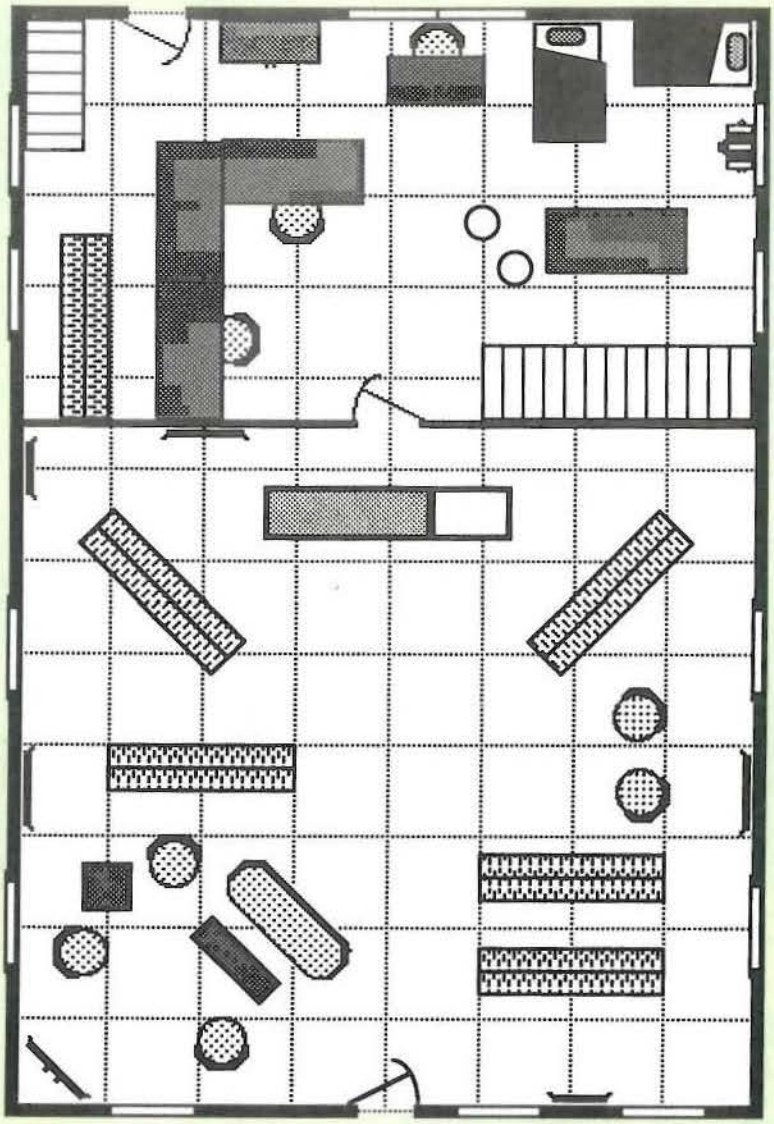
Lyle believes he finally has finished his project and will soon present the cloak to his father. His father said he will give Lyle the Younger a scroll containing *detect invisibility, infravision,* and *permanency,* which can be cast on the finished cloak. Lyle will have to find a competent mage who is at least 12th level and who will agree to cast the spells onto his exquisitely made cloak. Then, Lyle will be able to claim the title cloakmaster and take his place alongside his father.

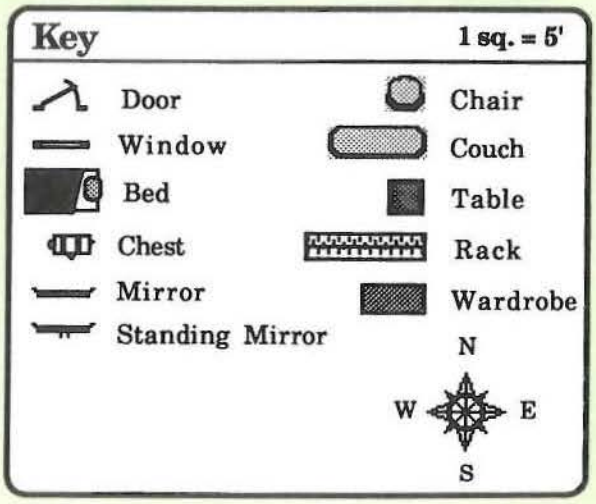
Lyle has few cares, rarely letting things worry him. However, he has been concerned lately about his father. Sometimes, in the early morning hours on moonless nights, he has seen Lyle the Elder disappear for a few hours. On one occasion, he saw his father carrying a large bundle toward a poor section of town. Lyle the Younger respects his father's privacy, but he is intensely curious about what Lyle the Elder is up to. And he is concerned for his father's safety.

Adventuring parties might want to visit Lyle's Fine Cloaks to sell fabrics, ornate trims, or premium furs they have acquired during their travels. Or, they might want to buy one of the finest-made cloaks in the Realms.

Lyle the Younger is seeking a high-level mage, and has let this fact be known around town. This could draw adventurers to the shop.

In addition, the shop is often visited by city nobles and government leaders, and sometimes they can be found there.





Letters

Continued from page 5

I have attended a precious few cons, and each one of them advertized Network games. I have yet to be "lucky" enough to play. I have a solution, but some might say it defeats the purpose of having conventions. I suggest non-con tournaments. When a member is in an area where gaming activity is at a virtual crawl, he can get his friends together and have a sanctioned game without worrying about too few or too many Network members playing, renting hotel space, driving hundreds of miles, or finding the playing area. With rules only slighty revised from regular tournaments, members can play with non-members and still get credit. To discourage cheating, the adventure must be submitted as well as the score cards for verification. Point values are halved compared to conventions, and non-member players get put on TSR's mailing list hinting they should join. What do you think?

John H. Goins
Milan, Tennessee

In case you don't know what John is talking about, the old Plan 2 *offered one year of Network membership and one year of DRAGON® magazine for $39.00. We still have plenty of forms with the "old" plans on them, but when those are gone that combined membership/ magazine subscription plan will be history. The main reason we're dropping this plan is because we now offer a lot more plans and premiums. We're also offering some renewal premiums on our new, multi-colored renewal notices (no more members overlooking their renewal notices in the mail because they look like ancient utility bills). When you renew now, you can get an embroidered patch that looks something like our membership pins, or a free back issue of the Newszine issue (sorry, you don't get to decide which), or an extra month of membership. Also, we're now offering a two-year membership plan. We are working on a special offer so people can subscirbe to POLYHEDRON™ Newszine, DRAGON® Magazine and DUNGEON® Adventures at a special rate.*

John, there are hordes of members who are excellent players or judges or both who don't have rankings. The Network has no way to recognize your experience outside of sanctioned events.

There is no reason a sanctioned event has to be run only at a convention, some non-convention tournaments have already been run, usually at game stores.

By the way, the presence of non-members doesn't affect your ranking points for an event, you get points for any sanctioned event you play, so long as the paperwork is completed and returned to HQ. Also, when we send a tournament package to a convention, we assume that the tournament will be run as promised. If any member attends a convention where Network events are canceled or badly handled, drop us a line; we might be able to solve, or avoid, the problem in the future.

Give Me A "C"

I'm not the type to make waves or the like, which is why you've not heard from me before. But, I just read the latest Newszine, and gee, everyone else is whining or asking questions, so why don't I?

My question concerns membership numbers. Now I'm something of a pack rat, and have held on to various membership ID cards you have issued me in the past. I've noted some strange goings on that I hope you can clear up.

My first card had my membership number as "0226 C." The C was for Charter Member. As I remember, those long fuzzy years ago, spiffy things were to occur for Charter Members in the future. I'm still waiting for the occurrence.

A couple of years passed and I re-upped. This time the membership "F0226 C." Well, I knew the C was for Charter Member. The "F" threw me. I guessed it meant I was "First" in line for the occurrence.

The next year, you started sending those flimsy IDs with the ranking on it. Now, this card had "50226" as my membership number. Both the "F" and "C" had disappeared. As had all the wonderful colors. My most recent card has the same number, and some color has returned to the card, but no thickness. Have you tried jimmying a door with this thing? It can't be done!

My question is, what is going on here? Having been with RPGA™ Network from the start, I know I was not the 50226 person to join. I have a copy of the original membership listing to prove it. Do I look stupid? Wait, don't answer that. I know this is trivial, but it is a concern to me.

Patrick M. Spera
APO, New York

We can say with reasonable certainty that you were the 279th person to join—there are about 53 charter, lifetime members ahead of all the other charter members.

There is some reason behind the membership numbering system. The original system used letter codes to indicate lifetime, charter, honorary, and other members. Unfortunately, the Network's original membership data base with its complex numbering system wasn't very useful for finding out which members lived in which states, or who had played which tournaments. As the data base program was refined over the years, the numbering system changed along with it. Your numbers indicate the following: The "C" did mean "Charter." The "F" indicated a five-year membership. Later, all Fs and Cs were changed into 5s—our computer can keep track of numbers pretty well, but doesn't do very well with letters. These days, just about everybody has a six-digit number starting with a "1." Numbers with fewer digits, and numbers starting with digits other than one indicate older memberships (when the numbering system was different) or places where the person who put the membership into the computer made a mistake.

We agree that the oldest membership cards looked pretty spiffy, but they had to be hand embossed and were too expensive. Of course, the flimsy new cards have their advantages—the charter member on the HQ staff ruined his old card a couple of years ago while trying to use it as an ice scraper; such an accident never would happen with a new card. The new cards also are thin enough to feed through a computer printer, which lets us send membership kits to newcomers much more quickly than with the old cards and allows us to quickly issue card replacements and updates.

There were some vague noises made 10 years ago about benefits for charter members, but the Network's staff at the time never said anything specific. The present staff is more concerned about improving services and keeping everything on track. ❑

Living Galaxy

Continued from page 26

the activities of its host, or a bombsat* with a delayed-action charge. The military hitchhiker (spysat or bombsat) is jammed with stealth equipment to avoid detection of any kind. Hitchhikers are sometimes called parasites. Some hitchhikers lay in wait for their victims (a la sleepers*) until they can "thumb rides."

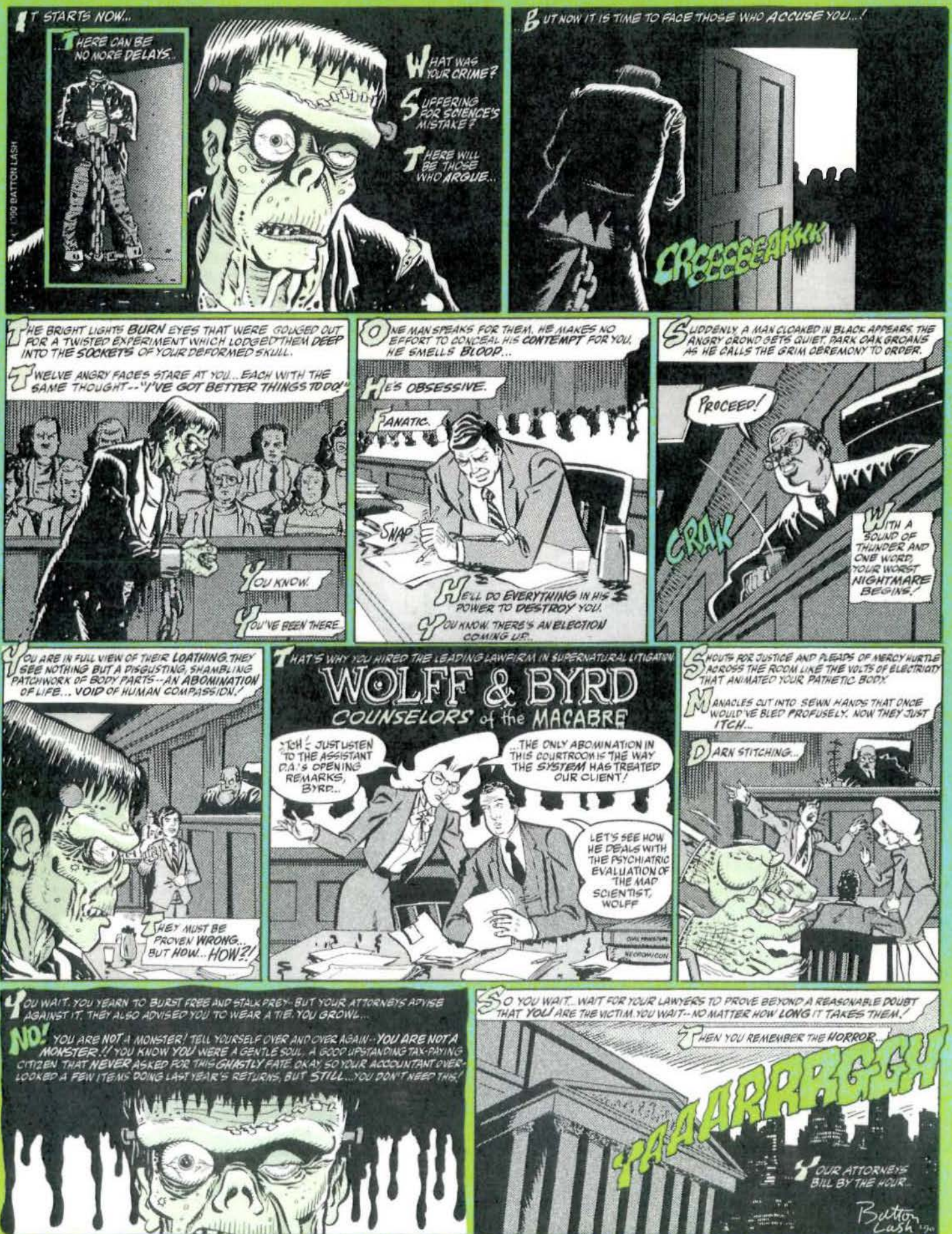
Junker: Junkers are simply nonfunctioning satellites, ones that have no further useful purposes. Known by a wide variety of nicknames, junkers include craft "killed" by battle damage, dead batteries, empty fuel tanks, micrometeorite or debris strikes, lost equipment, failed tests, human or computer error, negligence, radiation, sabotage, and "acts of God." Junkers pose a serious problem to spaceflight and must often be removed or disposed of by trashsats* or tugsats*. Some junkers, however, might be functional fakesats* or sleepers*. Junkers can prove to be excellent sources of spare parts for creative spacefarers—and sources of terrible danger and strange wealth for those willing to explore forgotten hulks.

Next issue—more satellites, and some ideas on how your PCs can meet them for a few thrill-filled evenings of adventure. ❑

Freeze Traitor! Austrian Regional Director Andi Mittterlechner plays computer's advocate in a Paranoia event. Also pictured, Stephan Kelvalevsky (center) and Ralph Schimpl (with ray gun).

Les Petersen, Network champion at Cancon in Canberra, Australia, poses with the spoils of victory.

A sample of the action at First Austrian Gamers Meeting in Vienna, Austria.


IT STARTS NOW...
THERE CAN BE NO MORE DELAYS...
© 1990 BATTON LASH
WHAT WAS YOUR CRIME?
SUFFERING FOR SCIENCE'S MISTAKE?
THERE WILL BE THOSE WHO ARGUE...
BUT NOW IT IS TIME TO FACE THOSE WHO ACCUSE YOU...!
CRRCCCCEAKKK
THE BRIGHT LIGHTS BURN EYES THAT WERE GOUGED OUT FOR A TWISTED EXPERIMENT WHICH LODGED THEM DEEP INTO THE SOCKETS OF YOUR DEFORMED SKULL.
TWELVE ANGRY FACES STARE AT YOU... EACH WITH THE SAME THOUGHT--"I'VE GOT BETTER THINGS TO DO!"
YOU KNOW.
YOU'VE BEEN THERE.
ONE MAN SPEAKS FOR THEM. HE MAKES NO EFFORT TO CONCEAL HIS CONTEMPT FOR YOU. HE SMELLS BLOOD...
HE'S OBSESSIVE.
FANATIC.
SNAP
HE'LL DO EVERYTHING IN HIS POWER TO DESTROY YOU.
YOU KNOW. THERE'S AN ELECTION COMING UP...
SUDDENLY A MAN CLOAKED IN BLACK APPEARS. THE ANGRY CROWD GETS QUIET. DARK OAK GROANS AS HE CALLS THE GRIM OBREMONY TO ORDER.
PROCEED!
CRAK
WITH A SOUND OF THUNDER AND ONE WORD, YOUR WORST NIGHTMARE BEGINS!
YOU ARE IN FULL VIEW OF THEIR LOATHING. THEY SEE NOTHING BUT A DISGUSTING, SHAMBLING PATCHWORK OF BODY PARTS--AN ABOMINATION OF LIFE... VOID OF HUMAN COMPASSION!
THEY MUST BE PROVEN WRONG... BUT HOW... HOW?!
THAT'S WHY YOU HIRED THE LEADING LAWFIRM IN SUPERNATURAL LITIGATION:
WOLFF & BYRD
COUNSELORS of the MACABRE
"TCH! JUST LISTEN TO THE ASSISTANT D.A.'S OPENING REMARKS, BYRD...
...THE ONLY ABOMINATION IN THIS COURTROOM IS THE WAY THE SYSTEM HAS TREATED OUR CLIENT!
LET'S SEE HOW HE DEALS WITH THE PSYCHIATRIC EVALUATION OF THE MAD SCIENTIST, WOLFF
SHOUTS FOR JUSTICE AND PLEADS OF MERCY HURTLE ACROSS THE ROOM LIKE THE VOLTS OF ELECTRICITY THAT ANIMATED YOUR PATHETIC BODY.
MANACLES CUT INTO SEWN HANDS THAT ONCE WOULD'VE BLED PROFUSELY. NOW THEY JUST ITCH...
DARN STITCHING...
YOU WAIT. YOU YEARN TO BURST FREE AND STALK PREY--BUT YOUR ATTORNEYS ADVISE AGAINST IT. THEY ALSO ADVISED YOU TO WEAR A TIE. YOU GROWL...
NO! YOU ARE NOT A MONSTER! TELL YOURSELF OVER AND OVER AGAIN--YOU ARE NOT A MONSTER!! YOU KNOW YOU WERE A GENTLE SOUL, A GOOD UPSTANDING TAX-PAYING CITIZEN THAT NEVER ASKED FOR THIS GHASTLY FATE. OKAY, SO YOUR ACCOUNTANT OVERLOOKED A FEW ITEMS DOING LAST YEAR'S RETURNS, BUT STILL...YOU DON'T NEED THIS!
SO YOU WAIT... WAIT FOR YOUR LAWYERS TO PROVE BEYOND A REASONABLE DOUBT THAT YOU ARE THE VICTIM. YOU WAIT--NO MATTER HOW LONG IT TAKES THEM!
THEN YOU REMEMBER THE HORROR...
AAARRRGGH
YOUR ATTORNEYS BILL BY THE HOUR...
Batton Lash '90

WOLFF & BYRD COUNSELORS of the MACABRE APPEARS IN THE NATIONAL LAW JOURNAL, BROOKLYN PAPER PUBLICATIONS, AMERICAN FANTASY AND, BEGINNING THIS ISSUE, POLYHEDRON NEWSZINE!